

The LIFE and LETTERS of ANNE ISABELLA, LADY NOEL BYRON

From unpublished papers in the possession of the late Ralph, Earl of Lovelace.

By ETHEL COLBURN MAYNE. 21s. net.

With an Introduction and Epilogue by Mary, Countess of Lovelace, and 12 illustrations.

This, the first authoritative life of Lady Byron, was undertaken by Miss Mayne at the request of Mary, Countess of Lovelace, who supplied her with all the material in her possession. It is based on documents (reproduced in appendices) hitherto unpublished, even in *Astarete*.

THE POEMS OF SIR WALTER RALEGH

Edited with a general and bibliographical introduction, variants and notes

By A. M. LATHAM, B.Litt. (Oxon.). 16s. net.

Sir Walter Raleigh's poetry, so much praised by his contemporaries, has been neglected, and a definitive edition was needed. The problem of his text has been most difficult, and Miss Latham's introduction is not only a satisfying piece of critical scholarship, but a lantern in some of the darkest byways of Elizabethan bibliography.

SCENES AND PLAYS

By GORDON BOTTOMLEY. 6s. net.

Also a signed and limited edition. 31s. 6d. net.

Clemence Dane in The Book Society's News: 'Here, surely, is a new verse as well as a new play form. If *Scenes and Plays* delight the ear and stimulate the imagination as successfully upon the platform as they do in the study, then dramatic drama can be said to be not only alive, but half-way home again.'

THE TREE OF LIFE

An Anthology of religious thoughts, opinions, teachings and philosophies compiled by V. DE S. PINTO and G. NEILL WRIGHT. 8s. 6d. net.

Observer: 'The book is a noteworthy one for its accumulation of *dicta* commanding attention both for substance and form, and yet totally unfamiliar to the vast majority of the well-read. As a source of refreshment for quiet hours, it is beyond praise in its qualities of discrimination, diversity and surprise.'

THE IRISH DRAMA, 1896-1928

By ANDREW E. MALONE. 15s. net.

With appendix giving list of productions of the Irish Literary Theatre, and names of dramatists, and an index.

Punch: 'A broadminded, thorough and equable piece of work, which gives every student of the stage a generous opportunity for appreciation and judgement. Its writer displays a unique knowledge of Dublin productions.'

10 Orange St. W.C.2

CONSTABLE

LIFE AND LETTERS

EDITED BY DESMOND MacCARTHY

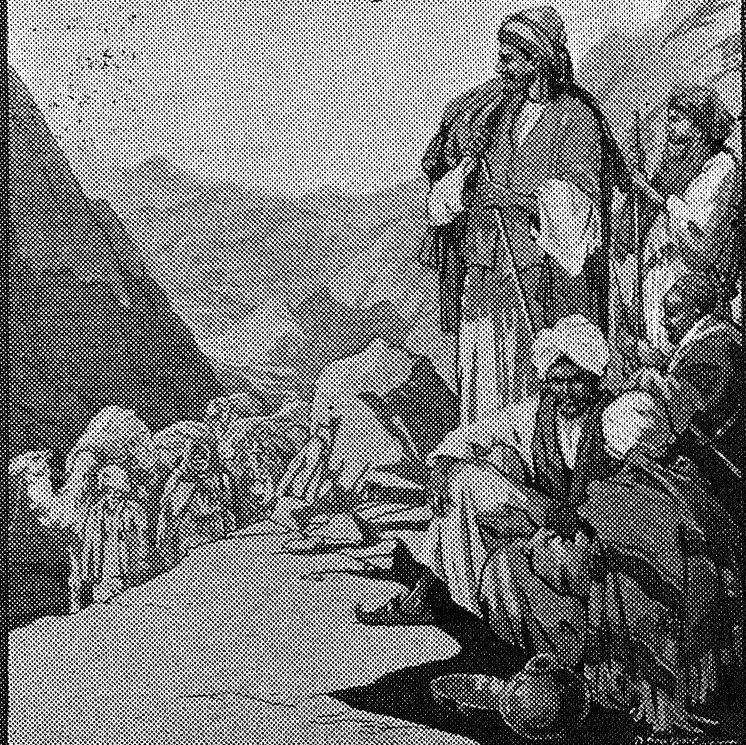
ASSISTANT EDITOR: OLIVER BRETT

VOL XII No. 15. AUGUST 1929

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	Page 81
A HIGH WIND IN JAMAICA By Richard Hughes	
Chapter I	83
II	104
III	118
IV	136
V	148
VI	156
VII	164
VIII	178
IX	197
X	219

A Winter Holiday—



INDIA CEYLON
by **P&O**

P&O HOUSE (F.H. Grosvenor Manager)
14 COCKSPUR ST., LONDON, S.W.1
PICTURE HANDBOOK POST-FREE

LIFE AND LETTERS

EDITED BY DESMOND MACCARTHY

ASSISTANT EDITOR: OLIVER BRETT

VOL XII No. 16. SEPTEMBER 1929

CONTENTS

	Page
DR. BURNEY'S EVENING PARTY By Virginia Woolf	243
OF SILENCE By F. L. Lucas	264
ENGLAND IN DECLINE By G. M. Young	288
THE MARK ON THE SHUTTER By Desmond MacCarthy	293
CORRESPONDENCE	307
READERS' REPORTS	308



RANDOM HOUSE · INC

*Random House, established January 1927
to create and distribute in America
good books with typographical distinction,
is the accredited agent
for the Nonesuch and Golden Cockerel Presses of England
and the Bremer Presse of Germany
In addition to the books produced in America under its own
imprint, Random House distributes the imprints
of the presses doing important creative work*

RANDOM HOUSE IMPRINTS

are on display at the London Bookshop of E. & J. Bumpus Ltd.

Most recent titles are:

THE SCARLET LETTER, *by Hawthorne.* Illustrated
by Valenti Angelo. Grabhorn Press

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, *by Stevenson.* Illustrated
by W. A. Dwiggins. Pynson Printers

ROCKWELL KENT'S BOOKPLATES AND MARKS.
Pynson Printers

RANDOM HOUSE
20 EAST 57 STREET · NEW YORK · U.S.A.

LIFE AND LETTERS

EDITED BY DESMOND MACCARTHY

ASSISTANT EDITOR: OLIVER BRETT

VOL XII No. 17. OCTOBER 1929

CONTENTS

	Page
ENGLAND MY NOT MY ENGLAND By Cyril Connolly	325
HENDERSON'S By Daphne Muir	343
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN EVANGELICAL By Lord David Cecil	354
A NOTE ON DR. JOHNSON'S FIRST EDITIONS By Oliver Brett	366
LOVE POETRY: A SUGGESTED ANTHOLOGY By Desmond MacCarthy	369
READERS' REPORTS	383

THE STRICKEN DEER

or, The Life of Cowper

The author attempts to draw a full-length portrait and to offer a psychological analysis of a brilliant and complex personality; to give some account of the world in which Cowper lived, and the extraordinary characters therein.

lord
david
cecil

(Shortly)

About 15s. net

COLERIDGE, The Somnambulist

At once a biography of Coleridge in the modern manner and an interesting examination of the philosophical ideas which underlay his poetry, M. Charpentier's book marks a milestone on the road to understanding of the poet-philosopher.

john
charpentier

15s. net

LIFE OF LADY BYRON

Spectator: 'One is tempted to say that Lady Byron will be viewed for ever after as Miss Mayne has seen her.'

Times Literary Supplement: 'A book of unbroken interest and unfailing grace.'

ethel
colburn
mayne

(2nd imp.)

21s. net

MEDIÆVAL CULTURE

An Introduction to Dante and his Time

Benedetto Croce has said: 'This great work of Vossler, excellent in nearly all its premises and rich in well-considered judgments, should show the way to a better method of criticism of Dante.'

karl
vossler

2 vols.

3rs. 6d. net

BLAKE & MODERN THOUGHT

Saturday Review: 'Honourably distinguished by its terseness, its clarity, its pervading common sense, and its author's resolve not to tease his own meanings out of the prophetic books.'

denis
saurat

illustrated

14s. net

QUEER BOOKS

Punch: 'I have seldom met an odder farrago of literary finds or one more pleasantly handled. Most of the stuff rehabilitates the shade of Dickens by its glorious atmosphere of pure Chuzzlewit. The illustrators, largely of the Cruikshank type, get a capital chance through-out.'

edmund
pearson

illustrated

15s. net

Constable

London

LIFE AND LETTERS

EDITED BY DESMOND MACCARTHY

ASSISTANT EDITOR: OLIVER BRETT

VOL XII No. 18. NOVEMBER 1929

CONTENTS

	Page
THE END OF WAR?	399
Correspondence between Erich Remarque and General Sir Ian Hamilton	
GENERAL LEE	412
By W. K. Fleming	
CRITICISM	433
By F. L. Lucas	
ABOUT A HUNDRED NEW BOOKS	466
By Desmond MacCarthy	
READERS' REPORTS	473

Very shortly.

Order now to be sure

THE STRICKEN DEER OR THE LIFE OF COWPER By LORD DAVID CECIL

Demy 8vo. With four illustrations. About 15s. net

The author attempts to draw a full-length portrait and to offer a psychological analysis of a brilliant, complex, and enchanting personality; to give some account of the world in which Cowper lived, and the extraordinary characters which peopled it.

Readers of *Life and Letters* will recall Lord David Cecil's essay published in the last number, dealing with Rev. John Newton and entitled 'The Autobiography of an Evangelical'. *The Stricken Deer* is the book upon which that essay was based.

THE TALE OF THE TWO LOVERS From the Latin of Pius II

Translated by Flora Grierson

10s. 6d. net

Times Lit. Supplement: 'Miss Grierson has made a charming book of this classic of the Italian Renaissance, with just enough introductory account of the life of Pius II to help the reader who is unfamiliar with this figure that typifies the transition from the Middle Ages to the new learning.'

10 and 12 Orange St.

CONSTABLE

London W.C.2

LIFE AND LETTERS

EDITED BY DESMOND MACCARTHY

ASSISTANT EDITOR: OLIVER BRETT

VOL XII No. 19. DECEMBER 1929

CONTENTS

	Page
WILLOW-HERB By R. C. Trevelyan	489
SOLANGE By Angèle Bartlett	492
BOSWELL'S TACT By Mrs. Clement Parsons	503
THE HOLY HANDKERCHIEF By Michael Dugdale	514
BALLADE OF ILLEGAL ORNAMENTS By Hilaire Belloc	529
THE SECRET HISTORY OF PRINCESS HENRIETTA By Peter Quennell	531
A JAPANESE POETESS By William Plomer	538
THE PROPHET AND HIS WIFE By Desmond MacCarthy	539
READERS' REPORTS	551

*A Father, who is a prominent Civil
Servant, writes, October 13th, 1929:*

'My Son was a candidate for a scholarship at a great public school, and it was important that he should show a broad general knowledge and understanding of some of the main events or aspects of English history. I found, however, that several years of history lessons had given him no real insight into the subject. I picked up "Drake" in your Junior History Series, and found it so interesting that I read it right through, and when I passed it to the boy he was equally *absorbed*. He then read other volumes in the series, and, as a result, not only did he secure special distinction in history in his examination, winning his scholarship, but the foundation has been laid of a keen interest in history, and he has learnt what fascination may lie in it when the dull pages of an ordinary text-book are exchanged for such a series as yours.'

history

SPECIMEN TITLES

Each volume illustrated. Coloured wrapper, suitable for gifts.
2s. 6d. net.

DRAKE, and the Beginnings of English Power. By J. D. UPCOTT
'A thoroughly well-planned and well-written book.'—
London Mercury.

CHARLES V, and the Rise of Modern Europe. By T. M. RAGG
'Good and spirited.'—*Spectator.*

NELSON, and the Command of the Sea. By J. D. UPCOTT
'To be commended for his succinct and accurate account.'—*Times.*

THE AGE OF DISCOVERY, Columbus, Vasco de Gama, etc.
By RHODA POWER. *'Miss Power knows how to write and is full of her subject.'*—*Spectator.*

24 BEDFORD STREET, LONDON, W.C.2. *Putnam*

LIFE AND LETTERS

E. M. FORSTER

BUTTERFLIES AND BEETLES

To break a butterfly, or even a beetle, upon a wheel is a delicate task. Lovers of nature disapprove, moreover the victim is apt to reappear each time the wheel revolves, still alive, and with a reproachful expression upon its squashed face to address its tormentor in some such words as the following: 'Critic! What do you? Neither my pleasure nor your knowledge has been increased. I was flying or crawling, and that is all that there was to be learnt about me. Impossible to anatomize me and find what breeds about my heart. Dissect the higher animals, if you like, such as the frog, the cow, or the goose—no doubt they are full of helpful secrets. By all means write articles on George Eliot. Review from every point of view Lord Morley of Borley's autobiography. Estimate Addison. But leave me in peace. I only exist in my surroundings, and become meaningless as soon as you stretch me on this rack.'

The insect-plaint is unanswerable, and if critics had not their living to get they would seldom handle any literary fantasy. It makes them look so foolish. Their state of mind is the exact antithesis of that of the author whom they propose to interpret. With quiet eyes and cool fingers they

pass from point to point, they define fantasy as 'the un-serious treatment of the unusual'—an excellent definition, the only objection to it being that it defines. A gulf between the critical and the creative states exists in all cases, but in the case of a fantastical creation it is so wide as to be grotesque. And in saying a few words about our butterflies and beetles, we are not unmindful of the remarks which, if they felt it worth while, they might pass upon us.

Butterflies and beetles are not always identical, and are sometimes dragon-flies, etc., too. For instance, in the paragraph above, when the phrase 'Lord Morley of Borley' slipped in, a beetle was speaking. No butterfly would probe so far. And when a Mrs. Shamefoot says, in one of Ronald Firbank's novels, 'The world is disgracefully managed, one hardly knows to whom to complain,' she, again, is a beetle. But when she says 'I adore the end of summer, when a new haystack appears on every hill', she has hovered from wittiness to charm. And: 'Nearer, hither and thither, appeared a few sleepy spires of churches, too sensible to compete with the Cathedral, but possibly more personal, like the minor characters in repertoire that support the star'—well, here we get both, the coloured glint, the naughty tweak. And when a gentleman who is married to a fox dreams all night of public schools for the children, and cannot think why Eton will not quite do, nor Harrow, nor Winchester, nor even Rugby, and then wakes up and thinks 'Ah! a private tutor is the solution', yet still feels dissatisfied, and finally remembers, and bursts into tears—here, again, we get something different, something downy and mothlike brushing the cheek, something at once countrified and sophisticated which pervades all the work of another

fantasist, Mr. David Garnett. It is, indeed, impossible to decide where one insect stops and another starts; they are metamorphosed behind a rafter or in full flight, or in the calix of a single flower, even on the very wheel of criticism, and there is only one quality that they all share in common: the absence of a soul.

With the soul we reach solid ground. As soon as it enters literature, whether in full radiance or behind a cloud, two great side-scenes accompany it, the mountains of Right and of Wrong, and we get a complete change of *décor*, adapted for writers who likewise treat the unusual, but who treat it mystically or humanistically. Butterflies and beetles may survive the soul's arrival, but they serve another purpose: they bear some relationship to Salvation. Think of all they go through in *Water Babies* or Sir James Barrie! Even the Three Mulla Mulgars are not completely on their own. Whereas in the creatures considered to-day there is nothing either to be saved or damned, their modish ecclesiasticism and rural magic bears no relation to philosophic truth, the miracles that transform them, the earthquakes that shatter, have no deeper implication than a conjuring trick. As soon as we realize that we cannot save them we shall enjoy them. But it is not easy for an Anglo-Saxon to realize so little. He requires a book to be serious unless it is comic, and when it is neither is apt to ring for the police.

In his masterly introduction to Firbank's collected works (*Duckworth*. £5 5s.), Mr. Arthur Waley puts us on the proper track. He remarks of Firbank that he 'seems as though endowed with a kind of inverted X-ray, which enabled him, not to penetrate into the unseen, but, on the contrary, continually to hover, as it were, an inch or two above the surface of things'. The remark applies to this

literature generally, which omits not merely the soul but many material actualities, and, if taken in large quantities, is unsatisfying. The writer who hovers two inches off everything may fascinate for a time, but finally he gives one the fidgets, and the reader will be both kind and wise to imitate him, and to repair to some other book at the first hint of boredom. So, like a swarm of summer insects, feeling perfectly free and disclaiming any vested interests in the soul, let us continue to flit over Firbank's five volumes, and from them to some of the stories of David Garnett.

Ronald Firbank died only three years ago, still young. But there is nothing up to date in him. He is *fin de siècle*, as it used to be called; he belongs to the 'nineties and the *Yellow Book*; his mind inherits the furniture, and his prose the cadences of Aubrey Beardsley's *Under the Hill*. To the historian he is an interesting example of literary conservatism; to his fellow-insects a radiance and a joy. Is he affected? Yes, always. Is he self-conscious? No; he wants to mop and mow, and put on birettas and stays, and he does it as naturally as healthy Englishmen light their pipes. Is he himself healthy? Perish the thought! Is he passionate, compassionate, dispassionate? Next question! Is he intelligent? Not particularly, if we compare him with another writer whom he occasionally resembles—Max. Has he genius? Yes, in his flit-about fashion he has, but genius is a critic's word, and one insect should not fasten it wantonly upon another. What charms us in him is his taste, his choice of words, the rhythm both of his narrative and of his conversations, his wit, and—in his later work—an opulence as of gathered fruit and enamelled skies. His very monsignorishness is acceptable. It is chic, it is *risqué* to titter in sacristies and peep through

grilles at ecclesiastical Thesmophoriazusaes, and if he becomes petulant and lets a convent or a pipkin crash, it does not signify, for likely enough we have thrown down the book ourselves a page before. Yes, he has genius, for we are certain to take the book up again, and to come across Reggie, whose voice was rather like cheap scent, or Cardinal Pirelli baptizing a dog, or Miss Siquier, daughter to a dean, who gave up all for the drama and was killed by a mouse-trap, or Mrs. Cresswell, who would have been canonized but for her unfortunate mot: 'If we are all a part of God, then God must, indeed, be horrible', or Princess Elsie of England, or St. Laura de Nazianzi, her rival, or the Mouth family leaving their negro nakedness for the lures of Cuna-Cuna, or a hundred other sentences or people (the two classes are not separable) which have been invoked by his gaiety and exoticism. It is tempting to conclude the catalogue with the words 'He was a perfect artist'; tempting, but unwise, for the words have something of the heavenly extinguisher about them, and we may discover that after all he was a glow-worm, and that now we cannot see him any more.

Vainglory is a good example of his earlier manner, and *Prancing Nigger*¹ of his later. *Vainglory* is all tweaks and skips. It professes to describe the attempts of Mrs. Shamefoot to insert herself into Ashringford Cathedral in the form of a stained-glass window. Bishop Pantry is reluctant. Meanwhile, she runs a florist's shop; indeed, *Meanwhile* would do admirably as a title for the book. On we read, confusing the characters with the incidents and neglecting the outcome, but tickled by the images and the turns of the talk. It is frivolous stuff, and how rare, how precious, is frivolity! How few writers can prostitute

¹First published in England as *Sorrow in Sunlight*.

all their powers! They are always implying 'I am capable of higher things'. Firbank is completely absorbed in his own nonsense; he has nothing to hide, he is not showing off, he is not (or is very seldom) polemical. When he attempts satire, or wistfulness (as in *Santal*), he fails at once, he was incapable of totting up life. But there are no attempts in *Vainglory*, it is an untainted series of absurdities, and most delightful, although Mrs. Shamefoot's efforts have not even a comic coherency.

It is strange that such a writer should have developed, but *Prancing Nigger* offers quite another pair of wings. The butterfly has come out, and has demanded, with such severity as it can master, a temperature and even a cage. The temperature is tropical; we are on an exquisite island which travesties Haiti. The cage is the fortunes of the Mouth family; we are bounded by them, and it is the first time we have been bounded by anything, we are approaching the semblance of a novel. Is colour, after a certain point, only to be increased by a judicious mixture of human interest? Perhaps the question presented itself to him. Certainly one comes nearer to 'minding' about Edna Miami and Charlie than about any of his previous characters—Charlie, the glorified symbol of the writer himself, the happy black boy, passing through the Customs at Cuna-Cuna with a butterfly-net and nothing to declare.

The English novel, to Mr. Waley's distress, is at present cluttered up with realistic lumber, and he draws a comparison between it and English painting. Fiction is mostly 'still in the Chantrey Bequest stage', and Firbank was an Impressionist, who broke away from academic naturalism by the method of selection and choice. Another reaction besides the Impressionistic is possible, namely the pre-

Raphaelite, where the writer or painter deliberately throws himself into a state of mind more simple than his own, and thus raises his work from the anecdotic to the lyrical. This, as Mr. Waley points out, is the reaction of Mr. David Garnett, who is deliberately naïve, and has found in fantasy a serviceable ally rather than a fairy queen. In other words, he is not a pure fantasist. Unlike Firbank, he wants to do something, he wants to write a story, and we are here in the presence of a much more sophisticated mind, a sophistication all the greater because it is so carefully controlled, and always kept out of doors. In such an atmosphere, must not the butterflies and beetles die? On the contrary, they flourish, particularly after dark, and as we go out into the spinneys or down the droves, our lantern disturbs their sleepy colonies.

It is this hibernating quality that makes his work so charming. Even when Mr. Cromartie plays with his caracal or Mrs. Tebrick chases her tail, the magic is indicated rather than expressed; it is folded up in a sheath, chrysalis fashion; we listen not so much to a fantastic story as to a story which contains a fantastic story. And, on the other hand, even when we are offered a normal narrative, as in *Go She Must!*, or the recently published *No Love* (Chatto & Windus, 7s. 6d.), the fantastic continues to lend a hand, the birds perch on the mad clergyman, the plum-trees and cider-casks almost whisper. Such help is only gained at a price, and there is often a sluggishness of movement; the wedding feast and fight in *The Sailor's Return* are examples of this. But a very unusual form of art results, of which *The Sailor's Return* itself is the finest specimen. It is less strange to have a Dahomey princess to wife than a fox, yet it is strange, and Tulip queers the rustic story just enough to give the maximum

of the effect that Mr. Garnett seeks. Ordinary objects, like tombstones or farmers, become fantastic because she is among them, Dorset seems Dahomey upside down, and at the close, when she settles down as a slattern where once she had ruled as a wife, we are left with a very rare emotion, with a sort of miniature sadness, perfectly proportioned to its dose, but on a tiny scale when compared with the emotions felt after tragedy.

The dose in *No Love* is infinitesimal. There is not a character nor an incident that we can label as unusual. We follow the fortunes of two families, and the main distinction between them is an ethical one. The Lydiates are warm-hearted, they know what happiness is, however much they quarrel and sulk. The Kelties have no love. 'No love in his heart. He has never learned what it is from other people. That's the explanation', is the final verdict of Benedict on Simon. Yet the fact that the two families live on an island somehow manages to intervene, and to cast a gossamer veil over their relationships. There are so few domestic islands in England, and this one is called Tinder Island. The trees on it, whether oak or plum, are not quite of the mainland species, the estuaries surrounding it have been sailed only by boys before, and Bevis was surely its original owner. Homely and friendly, in itself not fantastic at all, it manages, like Tulip, to modify those who approach it, and the modification is away from tragedy. To be absorbed in Benedict, Simon, and Cynthia, is to miss the spirit of the book, for behind their full-dress display bread is being made, pebbles are rattling, cows dropping dung, the country processes are functioning, not instinctively, as in Hardy, but with the deliberateness that is part of Mr. Garnett's charm.

Mr. Garnett's art is a hybrid. It blends in a new re-

lationship the stocks of fantasy and common sense. It is a successful experiment—unlike the art of Firbank, which contains no experiments at all. All that they share in common is an omission: they do not introduce the soul nor its attendant scenery of Right and Wrong, they are fundamentally unserious. This disconcerts the Anglo-Saxon reader, who approves of playfulness, but likes it to have a holiday air. In the absence of regular office hours, 'To sport would be as tedious as to work', says Prince Henry the prig, and the butterflies and their kindred neither contradict him nor agree—they merely go away, and allow him to ruin Falstaff and save England. Play is their business. If for an instant they swerve from it they are swept into the nets of allegory. They may or may not possess will-power, may or may not desire to hover over a certain hedge, but the will is a trifle in the realm of the lower air which they inhabit and invite us to share.

PETER QUENNEL

ARTHUR RIMBAUD

The neighbourhood of a volcano is inspiring. From a fragile platform of smoke, moored above its apex and imperceptibly swinging and veering upon the currents of the wind like a raft moored upon a stream, a sense of expectancy dominates and fertilizes the surrounding landscape. This monstrous companion has worked its way so thoroughly into the minds of the inhabitants that a critic would be hard put to it to understand their history and peculiar culture, unless it was by always keeping in imagination those gradually climbing slopes which tower without steepness over their heads, the mountain's enormous outflung shadow, the rosy intermittences of its midnight flash. . . . Ourselves the inheritors of a political tradition which could be expressed most appropriately in the least eventful of rolling curves, we shall do well to remember the rugged and volcanic profile of French political development—for the Restoration of the Bourbons had been followed by the Hundred Days; some fifteen years later Charles X had fallen and Louis-Philippe had taken his place; in 1848 the Monarchy had been succeeded by a republic; after barely four years' life the Republic had succumbed to an Emperor—with the accompaniment of unceasing invective, perpetual agitation against the existing order of things. And now, when an entire French army had surrendered and a Prussian army had reached the outskirts of the capital, the Empire, too, had fallen; Paris was in the hands of the Com-

munards, and Arthur Rimbaud, a boy of sixteen, footsore and quite exhausted, approaching the first revolutionary patrol that he met, told them that he had walked sixty leagues—the long road from Charleville, a little dead town near the Belgian frontier—to join them in their heroic defence. Once before he had left Charleville and gained Paris; then he had been imprisoned and returned. Barely a fortnight passed—Rimbaud had enlisted in the ranks of the incendiaries, he used to inform his friends, participating in the destruction of several notable monuments—and he was again retracing his steps towards Charleville, ragged, destitute, and solitary. His mother received him; the melancholy of a small provincial town swallowed him up. Childhood spent in the streets and squares of a small, undistinguished country town! The loneliness such a childhood implies! And yet, perhaps, it is a more fruitful sort of loneliness than the loneliness which a young man afterwards learns to appreciate, mute and sullen, amid the intellectual society on which hitherto his adolescent day-dreams have been centred. Rimbaud's third visit to Paris, undertaken at the invitation of Paul Verlaine, who had read *Les Effarés* and *Les Premières Communions*, was the bitterest fiasco of all. Shy, insolent, *farouche*, Rimbaud lay sprawling among his benefactor's friends, blunted their gaiety with the display of heavy, brooding seriousness which was his natural element, pulled awry their gravity with a savage outburst of that sudden satirical humour in which, though normally stern-faced and preoccupied, he sometimes indulged his spleen. 'Pisseurs de copie,' he muttered, 'salueurs des morts'—you journalists, busy at your daily excretion of the printed word; enlightened and emancipated spirits who canvass the respect of your fellows, lifting your hat-brims high as

some unknown coffin trundles past! 'Pustular toad!', his new acquaintance retaliated, resenting this truculent young *parvenu*, recognizing and resenting in him, no doubt, the angelic messenger of change. While, for his part, even the *bourgeois* of Charleville suited him better, Rimbaud must have reflected. It is our own, the *milieu* in which we have been brought up, however ostentatiously we thrust it behind us; the isolation of Madame Rimbaud's farm was preferable to the crowded antagonism he had found in Paris, his mother's taciturn ill-humour to the volubly-enunciated dislike of Verlaine's friends; as opposed to the negative sympathy which unites us to our parents, the liveliest show of intellectual independence is often specious and ineffective.

So it is towards Charleville we must look. There Madame Rimbaud, excusably irritated, but, at bottom, utterly unmoved by the vagaries of her younger son, went sternly and purposefully about her usual avocations. She was of peasant stock, *dévoté*, a shrewd business woman, a keen bargainer, an implacable parent, a hard and unforgiving wife. Her husband had been a spendthrift and a wanderer, the kind of man who cannot brook the ordinary domestic restraints. In her daughter, Isabelle, but softened and humanized, we divine the original harsh moral physiognomy of the older woman. Isabelle, too, was a believer—and with the added gift of tenderness; still, her faith was militant. It was like a weapon; she seems to have wrestled physically against her brother's blasphemous unbelief; his death-bed was the scene of her triumph. . . . 'God be a thousand times praised,' she exclaims in a letter to her mother, written on 28th October 1891, 'last Sunday the greatest pleasure was mine which I shall ever know. . . . No longer is it a poor

erring and suffering wretch who will pass away under my eyes: it is a just man, a saint and a martyr, one of the elect. . . . *Merci, mon Dieu, merci!*' But in the same letter she is answering some inquiries Madame Rimbaud had ventured with regard to the probable extent of Arthur's fortune; while, elsewhere, she prefaces an account of her brother's agony by a page or more of solicitous questioning: how does the harvest do, the cows—the little cow who is to calve in November? Let Madame Rimbaud sell her at the first opportunity! Such a fusion of spiritual and practical interests, far from weakening its effect, tends rather, on the other hand, to strengthen and amplify the significance of her faith. Implicit in her piety was the invaluable power of concentration, so apt at driving and, if necessary, goading, which achieves a moral whole by sheer disregard of any formal distinction; she deserts her *prie-Dieu* for her work-table and her ledger. The masterful ease with which she accomplishes this difficult transition is the solid basis upon which her puritanism rests. Arthur, too, shared her faculty of concentration. He shared, I believe, her innate puritanism, though his puritanism had adopted a form which was calculated to outrage the opinion of his contemporaries. He ran through the vicissitudes of unbelief with the rigid, unashamed and unequivocal dignity of an 'upright soul' approaching its God.

Fables envelop him. Rimbaud has become the Chatterton of our days—a figure that the youth-worshipper, the agnostic 'professor of energy', the Jesuit schoolman, have each in turn loaded with the spurious attributes of their cult. After the most cursory examination of these fictions, with what a serious and compact grace the true Rimbaud, the Rimbaud of the poems and letters, stands up! No superfluity here, not even the velleities of youthful

sentiment and appetite. A vague rumour of dissipations surrounds his life. He had a mistress in Charleville, Delahaye informs us, a girl of his own age: she had followed him to Paris and vanished suddenly into the throng; Rimbaud's face clouded when he mentioned her name. . . . Otherwise, his knowledge of the opposite sex would appear to have been limited by an absolute sentimental indifference—by indifference or hatred:

O mes petites amoureuses,
Que je vous hais!

—the close atmosphere and squalid apparatus of a young girl's mind inspiring in Rimbaud a repugnance as vivid and as lasting as the delighted and insatiable curiosity which it provoked in Jules Laforgue. He mistrusted those brief, dazzling contacts and, when the first flush of sexual inquisitiveness had died away, he ceased to desire them. His dissipations took on an experimental cast; he submitted himself to the contact of the outside world, ecstatic but impersonal, like some heroic virgin who submits with fortitude to her husband's soiling embrace. An inward reservation guaranteed his integrity. Squeamish, amorous of a thousand refinements which he had never enjoyed—wide, airy rooms, linen which does not exacerbate, but is so fine and soft that it mollifies and comforts the skin—the positive, deeply puritanical and ascetic spirit which inhabited him would give him no peace, till, again and again, he had tested his power of resistance, tested and tried it to breaking-point. He endured the promiscuity of barracks; he slept in fields and under bridges; 'hair and arm-pits full of lice,' he has described his condition. And yet, in spite of frequent and deliberate attempts to brutalize his native sensibility . . . 'se coucher dans la

merde', his moral equilibrium reasserted itself, the poetic demon reaffirmed its sway and, choosing as his subject the very humiliation he had undergone, the degradation which had encrusted him so thickly, but could by no means quite obscure his original candour, he wrote, for example, *Les Chercheuses de Poux*—a poem in which we read how, like the trodden blade of grass, painfully and gradually ticking back into the spiry elegance that its laws of growth ordain, beneath the women's silvery fingernails, their quick-drawn breath, the faint fluttering movement of their eyelashes, a profound calm once more takes possession of his spirit, a sweet quiescence delicious enough almost to bring tears:

L'enfant se sent, selon la lenteur des caresses,
Sourdre et mourir sans cesse un désir de pleurer.

A poet, already nearing the end of his maturity, already having conquered an astonishing richness and complexity of style, where he might expect a self-portrait which was wrinkled and faded and showed the trace of half a lifetime's unmitigated effort, sees the child that he still is, his own image, the reddened forehead—'le front de l'enfant, plein de rouges tourmentes'—the hair damp and matted with dew. He is beyond himself, sees clearly and dispassionately, feels the childish relief from pain, the intensity of relief which only children enjoy. Genius, Baudelaire had said in a sentence I have quoted above, was 'childhood recovered at will', the child's primitive impressionability exploited by adult nerves and intelligence. Then if, in flesh and blood, Rimbaud was the living realization of Baudelaire's critical sally, to Rimbaud—as he announced in one of his rare letters, dated from Charleville on 15th May 1871, just before leaving his mother's house

with the purpose of enlisting among the Communards—Baudelaire was the 'king of poets' and first of *voyants* or visionary writers. He represented the seriousness, the concentration of design which Musset and Victor Hugo—'colossal vulgarian!'—so markedly lacked. Yet he condemns his aestheticism, thinks the beauty of his style overpraised. The poet must transform himself into a visionary; that, it is true, Baudelaire had done. He must attempt a systematic '*dérangement* of all the senses'; he must seek to inoculate himself with every passion, every disease, emerging as the universal Sick Man, universal Criminal, universal Damned Soul, the supreme Scholar. Here we are reminded of a passage in which Baudelaire compares the poet to a Perpetual Convalescent, his preter-naturally heightened sensitiveness maintained by a perpetual rhythm of illness and recovery. We remember Baudelaire's systematic abuse of drugs and the magnificent use he made of his resultant sensations. Well, Rimbaud must do likewise—unspeakable torment which demands all his faith. That his poetic system required faith was, of course, a proof of its validity—as befitted the descendant of pious women to whom any line of action that was naturally abhorrent would come naturally recommended.

He had inherited their piety—to use 'piety' in the older meaning of the word—their moral staunchness, their appreciation of any regimen which involved harsh and ungrateful effort; but he had also inherited their practical bent: he, too, reckoned, computed, counted up. Madame Rimbaud, while her son lay agonizing on his death-bed, had inquired from Isabelle what fortune she supposed Arthur would leave behind; some months earlier, while his bearers were hurrying him down towards the sea

across the Abyssinian mountains, though he suffered atrocious pain, Rimbaud himself was industriously inquiring into the price of artificial limbs. And now, when he had reached Marseilles, his leg gone, his arm paralysed, the poet, turned colonial and man of affairs, who, I have suggested, had once surrendered the primitive, unwritten integrity of his spirit to the coarse embraces of life with the same cold, inflexible ardour as some devout, convent-bred girl might surrender her body, showed as jealous and tenacious a love of life as ever matron of the husband she has grown to value. 'J'irai sous la terre', he cried, frantically, 'et toi, tu marcheras dans le soleil!'. He raved, wept, blasphemed, vented his jealous fury and, struggling upright against his pillows, tried in vain to pick up the threads of business where he had dropped them a year ago; on the eve of his death, he was dictating an incoherent letter to a phantom correspondent, claiming an imaginary debt. The dying paralytic had still much in common with the young man who, between the ages of fifteen and twenty-three, had proved so avaricious of aesthetic and spiritual advancement. Already, on the occasion of the letter which gives a rough and tentative outline of his poetic system—'the new literature', as he envisaged it—a question arises whether literature, and literature alone, could afford his ambitions a permanent resting-place. Are its limitations not galling him already?, a reader asks. Does the spectre of Action not already haunt him? Suppose that the history of Rimbaud's verse may be arbitrarily divided into two periods; then the culmination of the earlier period is in *Bateau ivre*, the poem written by a boy for whom the sea was unknown, a mere literary symbol, yet which 'contained all the sea',

Verlaine said, its imagery dancing and boiling past our eyes like a kind of phosphorescent scum:

Et, dès lors, je me suis baigné dans le poème
De la mer infusé d'astres et lactescent. . . .

the fluidity of the measure presently gathering volume and plunging over into the wildest and most fantastically conceived shapes:

Glaciers, soleils d'argent, flots nacreux, cieux de braïses,
Échouages hideux au fond des golfes bruns
Où les serpents géants dévorés des punaises
Choient des arbres tordus avec de noirs parfums!

J'aurais voulu montrer aux enfants ces dorades
Du flot bleu, ces poissons d'or, ces poissons chantants.
Des écumes de fleurs ont béni mes dérades,
Et d'ineffables vents m'ont ailé par instants. . . .

these ebullitions subsiding in a glaucous melancholy calm:

Si je désire une eau d'Europe, c'est la flache
Noire et froide où vers le crépuscule embaumé
Un enfant accroupi, plein de tristesse, lâche
Un bateau frêle comme un papillon de mai.

immediately preceded by the superb invocation:

Est-ce en ces nuits sans fond que tu dors et t'exiles,
Million d'oiseaux d'or, ô future Vigueur?

an invocation addressed to the future principle of Vigour, towards whose secret imminence his life would henceforth be oriented.

Bateau ivre he carried with him to Paris; there he met and captivated Verlaine, met and severally disgusted or annoyed the Parnassiens. His second period had begun. In Paris, he set to work again; but a difference was apparent, a difference already felt at Charleville, both as regards the manner and the purpose of what he wrote. Hitherto, the narrow limitations of his art had contented him. Literary ambition and the wider, world-aspiring ambition which included it, had, so to speak, coincided. Now a slight fissure appeared. For evidence of the impatient and suspicious attitude that Rimbaud assumed when considering the greater part of contemporary literature, the larger number of *littérateurs*—Musset and Victor Hugo anathema! Gautier, Leconte de Lisle, Banville, sufferable, but no more—we need not go very far afield; his poems provide the internal evidence of a similar conflict. Then, whereas it is the peculiar virtue of great poetry that the forces it unchains should expend themselves within the compass of the given poem—like strong winds should blow themselves out, should leave no residuum but only a smooth-swept and vacant space where they have been, after their clamour a deep, pervasive hush—Rimbaud's earlier poems, even the finest among them, enclose elemental spirits of such undisciplined potency that the after-effect they make upon a reader's mind is often as chaotic as the beach after a storm, sharp underfoot with torn weed and broken shells. Like Marlowe, another poet whose verse, bloodshot with dreams of power, is the imperishable monument of a self-destructive, self-condemnatory spirit, Rimbaud took a definite pleasure in martyrizing his fluency against those fiery but, perhaps, slowly receding boundary-walls, *flammanitia moenia*,

which separate things possible from things impossible to express by words:

If all the heavenly quintessence they still
From their immortal flowers of poesy,
Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit;
If these had made one poem's period,
And all combin'd in beauty's worthiness,
Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least
Which into words no virtue can digest.

He knew the extent of his achievement; he was perfectly well aware, so he told his friend Delahaye, that *Bateau ivre* was a poem which, if it had equals and superiors, had certainly no equivalent; he knew that well. Praise would have been superfluous. Novel ambitions had taken hold of him. He still hoped to wring language for the very quintessence of expression; he wished himself a sort of actual physical control, a territorial dominion over the words he used. He had written the sonnet, *Voyelles*, allotted the separate vowels—with the subconscious collaboration, it has latterly been pointed out, of an old spelling-book whose pictures had delighted his childhood—their several colours and images; he had exhausted the treasures of classical literature, and hoped to find the ultimate and mysterious formula, the secret of the final, irrefutable *Alchimie du Verbe*, transcribed more clearly and more simply in 'old-fashioned books, Church Latin, ungrammatical pornographic works, superannuated novels, fairy-stories, children's tales, ancient operas, stupid catches, silly rhymes'. He had anticipated the modern taste for 'idiotic paintings, fan-lights, stage scenery, circus

back-cloths, sign-boards, popular prints'. His appetite for curious works of information the public librarian at Charleville—or, multiplied in monstrous plural, librarians, *Les Assis*, who rise grumbling, gasping, and belching when you ask them for a book—had found it hard to assuage. Still his hunger and thirst persisted. Born during the Middle Ages, occultism, no doubt, would have been his refuge. Those labyrinthine underground chambers and corridors had connected art to art, science to science; they honeycombed the entire structure of human knowledge; they comprehended the highest and the lowest satisfactions; like a remote, always alluring, always retreating disc of light, they promised that the seeker after truth should one day step clear into the blinding noontide of omniscience. . . . If my reading of the poems is correct, at about the same time as he wrote *Bateau ivre*, just before leaving Charleville on his third visit to Paris, a conviction must have dawned across Rimbaud's mind—a very gradual dawn, maybe, a dawn which filters and irradiates the darkness, but does not bring morning in a single stride—that literature could never wholly satisfy him. He did not discontinue his literary practices, but rather immersed himself in them more thoroughly. He worked hard; he tortured syllables, decorating his conversation with words brutally and deliberately twisted out of shape—'*absomphe*, sange de glaciers' for absinthe, '*Pamerde*' for Paris.

Yet our genius will often make decisions of which we are not immediately apprised; a load had been lifted from his verse. The heavy accumulation of dreams and temporal longings was drawn aside to wait another employment. His poems became slighter in texture, but, proportionately, finer and more compact. A compressed

and rarefied manner sometimes makes them cryptic. Thus, in the beautiful lyric, *Bonheur*, the exact incidence of '*le coq gaulois*' may puzzle his reader's interpretative imagination. Restored to its context in *Une Saison en Enfer*, the reference is sufficiently plain. Rimbaud furnishes a gloss, while, in a passage taken from one of his letters, the gloss itself is further extended. 'Nowadays', he tells us, 'I work at night, from midnight till five o'clock in the morning'. And he goes on to describe how last month he had occupied an attic window, overlooking the majestic foliage of huge trees; how, at three o'clock, the candle had flickered and paled, the birds had all begun to sing at once, and he had put his work aside and sat, spitting down onto the tiles, looking across the trees into the narrow, deep city gardens, glancing up towards the transparent morning sky and watching the *lycée* opposite, absorbed in the odd, heavy-lidded slumber of a shuttered French house. Presently, he would hear a noise of wheels along the boulevard—'*bruit saccadé, sonore, délicieux*'—and, when the streets were already thinly peopled with workmen, would leave his room, buy a loaf of bread and drink greedily in the wine-shops; then back to his room and to sleep. But meantime, at his window, confronting the absolute repose of virgin dawn, he had recaptured the exquisite *solitariness* which is exhaled from some of the earliest verses he ever wrote:

Par les soirs bleus d'été j'irai dans les sentiers,
 Picoté par les blés, fouler l'herbe menue:
 Rêveur, j'en sentirai la fraîcheur à mes pieds,
 Je laisserai le vent baigner ma tête nue!

Solitude within a solitude; silence only interrupted by the chill impersonal noise of birds, as though the multiplicity

of warring noises had been reduced to these few thin trills and quavers; his interior quietude similarly profound, the questions which engaged him equally simplified, he mused under the peaceful obsession of a single, all-sufficient problem: 'Le Bonheur! Sa dent, douce à la mort, m'avertissait au chant du coq—*ad matutinum*, au *Christus venit*—dans les plus sombres villes:

O saisons, ô châteaux!
Quelle âme est sans défauts!

J'ai fait la magique étude
Du bonheur qu'aucun n'élude.

Salut à lui chaque fois
Que chante le coq gaulois. . . .

But dawn was succeeded by the heat and clamour of the day. His health was menaced, he believed. Like Gérard, he feared that his visions might overwhelm him—'les hallucinations tourbillonnaient trop'; that, like Gérard, they might precipitate him finally into 'the living sea of waking dreams', where reason and life itself would founder. Words were poisoning him; this commerce with words was as subtly degrading as the commerce of the flesh—'O pureté! pureté!'. Verlaine, unhappy and restive, had begged Rimbaud to leave Paris in his company; they would travel together, cross the sea, perhaps, visit new cities. Rimbaud accepted; Paris, and the midnight efforts which his existence there implied, were fast becoming intolerable. He longed to know the sea, he remarked, as if it could have washed away a stain.

They over-ran the north; eventually they reached London, settling in a tall, sad-faced, evil-looking London

house near the Tottenham Court Road. Their companionship had at first been care-free and light-hearted, but Verlaine, who, with his enormous convex forehead, his small, deeply-sunk, crafty eyes and short, broad nose-ridge, so much resembled some venerable brute-god, a mask of Cheiron the Centaur, was now proving himself a source of continual irritation and disgust to the rigidly upright, proud-stepping young Achilles whom he followed. As Rimbaud's poetic ambitions declined, his puritanical bias grew more violent. The slovenliness of Verlaine's spirit, his frivolous self-indulgence, revolted and outraged his friend. Then this was the poetic temperament—this sly, libidinous, childish being the *sacer vates*, embodiment of the art in which he had hoped to excel! On Rimbaud, the effect of their association was twofold; he was disgusted, disillusioned, but, at the same time, stimulated; by comparison, he felt strong, pure, invincible. 'Pitiable brother,' he wrote in *Vagabonds*, a prose-poem included in *Les Illuminations*, 'what appalling hours of wakefulness I owe him. . . . I took advantage of his infirmity. It is through my fault that we shall return home as outcasts and slaves. For he supposed me at once the irreclaimable harbinger of misfortune and a creature of the strangest innocence. I replied, laughing harshly . . . and presently gained the window, whence across the countryside traversed by bands of musicians discoursing rare harmonies, I created the phantoms of future nocturnal splendours'. . . . Such were *Les Illuminations*, a prophetic frieze, anticipation of future magnificence, still unimagined and unrealized, traversing the intense darkness of his mind. It was Verlaine's function, many years later, to collect and name them; Rimbaud himself tired of his poems as quickly as he tired of his friends. His lonely

puritanism seems to have excluded friendship; his tenderness was universal:

Je ne parlerai pas, je ne penserai rien.

Mais l'amour infini me montera dans l'âme;

Et j'irai loin, bien loin, comme un bohémien,

Par la Nature—heureux comme avec une femme.

Brought face to face with the particular, his asceticism made him distant and hard—cruel, too. Naturally an adept in the arts of friendship, for all his instability unswerving and constant, Verlaine became the *Vierge Folle*, foolish, doting virgin, perpetually wounded but never alienated, whose keenest and most often recurring fear was lest the beloved should desert him: 'Je lui faisais promettre qu'il ne me lâcherait pas. Il l'a faite vingt fois, cette promesse d'amant'. And, in his character of *Époux Infernal* or Demon Lover, no, he must surely leave him, Rimbaud would reply; it was his duty; . . . 'il faudra que je m'en aille, très loin, un jour', meanwhile exploiting this impressionable captive of his charm, this lover whom his 'mysterious delicacies' had seduced, who had given up wife and parent for his sake, now lulling him with the serious, unsmiling womanly softness which he knew how to command, now encouraging him with promises, now transporting him violently to the storm-swept region in which he lived—from these contacts himself always deriving strength and renewed impetus, in proportion as their recoil upon his friend was weakening and enervating.

Was his renunciation already formulated? In London, Rimbaud had bought one of those high chimney-shaped black hats in which affluence and respectability then walked abroad; the elusive beauty of his features, his pale brilliant eyes, his sullen, mutinously curved mouth, must

have been almost completely obliterated by the addition of this sombre covering. It was a symbol which he cherished. Good-bye to beauty as to genius! He had set his mind upon a foothold in the world of men, firmer and more dependable than either genius or beauty could give. His literary exploits, he realized, had been a substitute for the excursions into the world of power, of financial and political eminence, from which youth and poverty had debarred him. He regretted the numerous advantages which might have been and, alas, were not his: 'Si j'avais des antécédents à un point quelconque de l'histoire de France!—Mais non, rien', he wrote in *Une Saison en Enfer*. And later: 'Le sort de fils de famille, cercueil prématuré couvert de limpides larmes. Sans doute la débauche est bête, le vice est bête; il faut jeter la pourriture à l'écart'. Is there yet time?, he wonders. Other courses of life must, no doubt, be open to him. 'L'ennui,' he continues, 'n'est plus mon amour. Les rages, les débauches, la folie—dont je sais tous les élans et les désastres—tout mon fardeau est déposé. Appréciations sans vertige l'étendue de mon innocence.'

The above sentences, written at a period when he had finally broken away from the old hateful associations, and nothing lay betwixt him and the fulfilment of his dream but the impossibility of knowing at exactly what point he would best commence his attack, may, I think—since resolutions of this sort have usually run through a long heredity before ever they force their way into words—be read as giving a faithful indication of the much earlier state of mind. It would reveal a lack of courage, though, if he did not first regulate his accounts. He must shake off Verlaine; he must compose *Une Saison en Enfer*, setting forth his previous obsessions, depicting the *drôle de ménage* which he

had formed with his *Vierge Folle* in London and Brussels, expressing his determination henceforward to curtail his appetite that its fare might be the more solid:

Si j'ai du goût, ce n'est guères
Que pour la terre et les pierres.
Je déjeune toujours d'air,
De roc, de charbons, de fer.

* * *

Mangez les cailloux qu'on brise,
Les vieilles pierres d'églises;
Les galets des vieux déluges,
Pains semés dans les vallées grises.

He does not underestimate the gravity of his new position — 'l'heure nouvelle est au moins très severe' — nor the degree of failure which it implies: 'Moi! moi qui me suis dit mage ou ange, dispensé de toute morale, je suis rendu au sol, avec un devoir à chercher, et la réalité rugueuse à étreindre!'. The youngest angel, his imagination was losing its candour; its very excess was ruining him. He was approaching that stage on his journey which, when it is attained, inclines the artist, as he reviews the path by which he has come, to cry out, lamenting the irrecaptable freshness of his youth:

O! I cannot, cannot find
The undaunted courage of a virgin mind.

Any virtue, acquired during the journey, shall be put to the test now that he is preparing, absolutely and finally, to rid himself of its benefits. 'For I can say that victory is mine: the gnashing of teeth, the hissing of the flames, the poisonous sighs are at length dying down. Abominable

memories are growing dimmer. My last regrets are leaving me—my jealous partiality for beggars, brigands, lovers of death, every sort of backwardness'. His new world shall be the world of accepted values, known quantities, substantial rewards. At least, he will be rigorously honest. 'Il faut être', he concludes, 'absolument moderne'.

What remains of Rimbaud's story I need scarcely recapitulate here—the ruthlessness with which he abandoned and betrayed Verlaine, his rejection of the poet's evangelistic efforts (for he still hated any touch of the spiritual 'grossness' which he saw evinced in Verlaine's easy alternation to-and-fro betwixt the blessedness of the saint and the corporeal satisfactions of the sinner)—the obstinate energy that steeled him in his astonishing and unsuccessful battle against the combined forces of circumstance. I have attempted his portrait as a companion and foil to the portrait of Tristan Corbière. No two poets could be more different. *Jemenfoutisme*, as played by its lesser exponents, is a sort of game; because it is a game, it can be sustained indefinitely. The futility of a game lends its professionals a superior, a sometimes inhuman, patience. Men tire more quickly where bodies and souls are concerned. The ardour of their embrace, Barbey d'Aurevilly tells us in the story called *Le Bonheur dans le Crime*, is reputed to sterilize the lovers' reproductivity. So immoderate while it endured, Rimbaud's creative fury seems to have killed in his work the reproductive power which exists in the work of many smaller and less generally esteemed writers. His influence is not direct; he has not fertilized directly as Baudelaire fertilized and even Jules Laforgue. His influence is widespread; like the dust of a volcanic eruption, it floats along the upper air, drifts

gradually through the ether and will, no doubt, lend our sunsets and our dawns an increased metallic effulgence for yet many years to come. Besides, it has been actually harmful; it has sanctioned innumerable ineptitudes, hoisted innumerable poetasters to an aery elevation from which the subsequent downfall could not be other than painful and ignominious. Rimbaud was a celestial phenomenon, a meteoric sign that, rushing out from among the stars, driving its bolt impetuously into the earth, where it lay blazing and sparkling, made a calcined and uninhabitable zone. Or perhaps we should say that, when Rimbaud threw aside his poetic instrument, he was careful to snap asunder first some essential string. He was emphatic, during his later years, in the disgust with which he regarded his former literary experiments. 'Je ne m'occupe plus de ça', he told Delahaye, sadly and contemptuously, in 1879. He was then twenty-four years old; his remark was prohibitive as well as valedictory. It is with a certain hesitation, a certain awkwardness and alarm that the critic lays his hands upon an instrument which the master-brain, who conceived it, has broken and incontinently flung away.

W. J. LAWRENCE

THE DEDICATION OF EARLY
ENGLISH PLAYS

It is curious that, notwithstanding the widespread industry of Elizabethan investigators, there are facts still staring scholarship full in the face which scholarship looks at with unseeing eyes. Not so very long ago, the Master of Jesus College, in a book giving a charming fancy sketch of Shakespeare's early days, advanced as a proof of his assertion that Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, took no more than the average playgoer's interest in the drama of his time, that

Before 1599, he was the centre of a literary circle, several of whom dedicated their works to him, but none of them were dramatic.

Here the implication (analogues of which could be cited, if need be, from other equally erudite writers) is about as far from the truth as implication could well be. Scholarship has yet to grasp that the dedication of common plays during Elizabeth's reign, that is of such as formed part of the living drama, was highly unfashionable, and of the utmost rarity. It is true that so far back as 1562, James Rowbotham had inscribed his *Pleasant and wittie Playe of the Cheasts* to that Maecenas of letters, the Earl of Leicester, a piece of whose antecedents we know nothing; but from that time for forty years onwards no common play was ever dedicated to any person of consequence.

This abstention has a significance not difficult to de-

termine. In those days all writing done for pay was looked upon as soiled in the process, and unworthy of patronage. It was not a matter of insular prejudice: the whole civilized world still had the feeling that the arts should not be commercialized: it was a prolongation of the renaissance spirit. Even when the seventeenth century had got well under way, Gaillard could write with a curl of his lip that

Corneille est excellent, mais il vend ses ouvrages;
*Rotrou fait bien les vers, mais il est poète à gages.

With this feeling in the air, it is not surprising that the Elizabethan dramatist's Muse, in having lent her aid to the writing of verses for a market wherein they were clapper-clawed by the vulgar, was considered nothing better than a common drab.

If we have lost sight of that attitude, it is because it has become obscured by the contemporary existence of certain nice distinctions. Against the drama in its quiddity, apart from puritanical prepossessions, there was no initial prejudice. University plays, whether in Latin or English, plays written for Court or inns-of-court performance, and plays that were purely literary products and not intended to be acted, suffered no such ban. They were placed in a higher category. Most of the early translations of Seneca had epistles dedicatory to honoured people. In 1591, *Tancred and Gismunda*, an Inner Temple tragedy, was inscribed by Robert Wilmot to Lady Mary Peter and Lady Anne Gray. A year later, William Gager's *Meleager*, an Oxford Latin play acted before a distinguished audience which included Sidney and Leicester, was dedicated to Essex. In 1594, Kyd, though a well-known professional dramatist, was permitted openly to place his unacted translation of

the *Cornelie* of Garnier at the feet of the Countess of Sussex. No play unsoiled of the common stage but had its patron. Few, however, of the earlier epistles dedicatory have any interest. The most noteworthy exception occurred in 1578, when George Whetstone, in inscribing his *Promos and Cassandra* to his kinsman, William Fleetwood, took advantage of the opportunity to indulge in a critical disquisition on drama.

In the circumstances, speculation is naturally aroused as to how *Fedele and Fortunio* (better known as *The Two Italian Gentlemen*) came, in 1585, to escape the ban. Acted at Court, it was an acknowledged translation of a recent play of Pasqualigo, and may have been made for court performance alone. On the whole, however, there is little need to exercise one's mind over its immunity, seeing that at least one of the dedicatees was a person of no consequence, and the other could not be lured into allowing the full use of his name even by the fact that the play had 'beene presented before the Queenes most excellent Maiestie'. The real interest of the case lies in the double dedication. Two copies of the play are extant, each bearing the same epistle, but addressed to different individuals. The dedicator masquerades under reversed initials, now as 'A. M.' and now as 'M. A.', and the second dedicatee is no more clearly indicated. Curiously enough, the epistle is written in a strain which makes it difficult to determine whether it was the work of the translator or some other person. It actually begins by 'commending' 'this pleasant and fine conceited Comoedie' to 'Maister John Heardson, Esquire' (and M. R.).

Since the man of varying initials had written himself down as a trickster in extracting douceurs from two worthies for the one play, he was certainly wise in taking

his place in the ranks of the obscure. True, new editions of books were frequently given fresh dedicatees, but this was not a case of a new edition. Between it and the much later instance cited by Professor D. Nicoll Smith, in his account of 'Authors and Patrons', in *Shakespeare's England*, there is no analogy. We learn there that, when in 1658, Massinger's *The City Madam* was published by Andrew Pennycuicke, one of the players in the original cast, it was dedicated to 'the truly Noble John Wrath Esquire'. What 'the soft answer' was that brought about the change must remain a mystery, but when the play was reissued in 1659, the same epistle was addressed with uncomplimentary economy to 'the truly Noble and virtuous Lady Anne Countess of Oxford.'

One recalls that in bygone days there was a type of unscrupulous hack (not much represented among the playwrights) who had a trick of distributing transcripts of a poem broadcast with the hope of reaping abundant recompense. For him, Dekker, though the most poverty-stricken of authors, had profound contempt. In the opening scene of the second part of his *Honest Whore* he shows Antonio Georgio, a poor scholar, waiting upon Hippolito with a tribute:

Hip.—A book!

Ant.—Yes, my good lord.

Hip.—Are you a scholar?

Ant.—Yes, my lord, a poor one.

Hip.— Sir, you honour me.

Kings may be scholars' patrons, but, faith, tell me

To how many hands beside hath this bird
flown.

How many partners share with me?

Ant.—

Not one

In troth, not one. Your name I hold most dear;
I'm not, my lord, of that low character.

To grasp the attitude of the cultured in the sixteenth century is to comprehend why Shakespeare expressed himself in the Sonnets as shamed by what he had brought forth. Yet wonder still continues to be felt that he never took the trouble to dedicate a play to anybody! Even had he been so inclined, the dead weight of custom and opinion would have checked the impulse during the major portion of his career. Not until he was on the verge of his retirement to Stratford was the old prejudice against the dedication of common plays entirely dissipated. His was the common story. It would be idle to take Samuel Daniel as the exception, because Daniel, who once exclaimed 'God forbid I should soil my papers with mercenary lines', was primarily a court poet, and only momentarily (and that by accident) a theatre poet. His unacted *Cleopatra* had been inscribed in a poetic epistle to Lady Pembroke on the plea that it had been inspir'd by her 'well-grac'd Antony', itself a translation from the French. His two privately-performed pastorals he dedicated to Queen Anne before whom they had been presented. What is curious about his career is that the man who had such a horror of mercenary work should have been punished for a temporary surrender of his principles. Once, in a period of pecuniary stress, he had turned to his unfinished and neglected tragedy, *Philotas*, and completed it (though never intended for public performance) for production at the Blackfriars by the Children of the Chapel. Double mortification ensued. Not only did the

play fail, but he got into trouble with the Privy Council because of the fortuitous resemblance of its plot to the story of Essex. Yet such was his favour at Court that when he sent it to the press in 1605, he was authorized to dedicate it in a verse epistle to his patron, Henry Prince of Wales. It is significant, however, that the play was not printed alone like other plays, but with a selection of the author's poems.

To see the reason, therefore, for Shakespeare's abstention from play-dedication, it is not to Daniel we must turn, but to orthodox theatre poets. Heywood, the most prolific dramatist of his time, inscribed only two of his plays to patrons, and those apologetically and in Caroline days. Middleton, though, sometime after 1620, he took the trouble to dedicate a specially-made scrivener's transcript of his unpublished tragi-comedy, *The Witch*, to a friend, otherwise elected to remain silent. Dekker, though now and again he inscribed a city pageant to the Lord Mayor of the period, or put a patron's name at the front of a pamphlet, never saw fit to dedicate a play to any particular person until near the end of his life, and then only his *Match Me in London*. But in earlier days his *Shoemaker's Holiday* had been addressed 'to all good fellows, professors of the Gentle Craft, of what degree whatsoever', and his retaliatory *Satiromastix* to 'The World:' 'not to thy greatness, but to the greatness of thy scorne, defying which, let that mad dog Detraction bite till his teeth be worne to the stumps'. Beaumont and Fletcher unitedly never indulged in a play-dedication, but Fletcher in the undated (1610?) quarto of *The Faithful Shepherdess*, addresses separate dedicatory verses to Sir Walter Aston, Sir William Skipwith, and Sir Robert Townsend, and Beaumont inscribed his solitary court masque to Bacon and the Benchers of

Gray's Inn and the Inner Temple. Masques, of course, though pertaining of the nature of drama, are not to be reckoned in the category of plays, but they were certainly soiled literature (in the old sense), in having, for the most part, been written for money; and it can only have been their common association with the Court that rendered them immune from contempt. Thus it was that Daniel, in 1604, dedicated his *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* to Lucy Countess of Bedford, and Jonson, in 1609, his *Masque of Queens* to Henry Prince of Wales. The young prince had expressed a desire for a copy of the latter masque, presenting a list of the authorities on which the witches' rites were based. Jonson's manuscript dedicatory copy is now one of the treasures of the British Museum.

One is apt to be cynical about the sincerity of the average dedication of Shakespeare's day, but one, at least, was made in good faith since the dedicatee had nothing to gain by it. Marston, at the front of a particular edition of *The Malcontent*, issued in 1604 (there were several in that year), wrote, 'Beniamino Jonsonio, poetæ elegantissimo, gravissimo, amico suo, candido et cordato, Johannes Marston, Musarum alumnus, asperam hanc Thaliam D.D.'. Noteworthy as the first dedication from one professional dramatist to another, this honest tribute is still more remarkable from the fact that the two had been engaged not long previously in bespattering each other with mud for the amusement of the many-headed beast. Some two years earlier, Marston, doubtless finding the grapes sour, had avowed his contempt for patronage by dedicating *The History of Antonio and Mellida* 'to the onely rewarder, and most just poiser of vertuous merits, the most honorably renowned No-body, bountious Maecenas of Poetry, and Lord Protector of oppressed

innocence'. He proffered him 'the worthlesse present of my slighter idleness'—an indication of the contemporary attitude towards plays as literature—and signed himself 'thy affied slave, and admirer'. Later, there were palpable echoes of Marston's mockery. Day, in his epistle to 'Signior No-body', prefixed to his *Humour out of Breath*, in 1608, addresses him as 'Worthless Sir', and, in reference to the fatigue of dancing attendance upon the high and mighty—one thinks inevitably of Chesterfield and Dr. Johnson—says:

I protest I had rather bestow my pains on your good worship for a brace of angels certain, than stand to the bounty of a betterman's purse-bearer, or a very good woman's gentleman-usher: my reason is I cannot attend: your *Bis dat qui cito* stands so like a loadstone over your great gate, that I fear 'twill draw all the iron-pated Muse-mongers about the town in a short time to your patronage.

This, however, was mere caprice. Day, a year previously, had united with his collaborators, Will Rowley and George Wilkins, in appropriately inscribing *The Travels of Three English Brothers* to the Sherley family. Later, in 1612, Field was to assume the pose of indifference in his dedication of *A Woman is a Weathercock*, which he addressed to 'any Woman that hath been no Weathercock', with the confession that at first 'I did determine not to have dedicated my play to anybody, because forty shillings I care not for; and above few or none will bestow on these matters especially falling from so fameless a pen as mine is yet'. Besides the revelation of the regulation *douceur* expected by dedicators of plays, we have here a faint clue to the reason for the continued

sparsity of dedications of this order hinted at by Francis Burton, the publisher of the anonymous *Tragedy of Claudius Tiberius Nero*, who, in inscribing it in 1607 to Sir Arthur Mannering, writes:

If custom, right worshipful, had so great a prerogative as that nothing crossing it were allowable, then might I justly fear reprehension for this my dedication, having to my knowledge but a singular precedent herein; and the reason wherefore so many plays have formerly been published without Inscriptions unto particular Patrons, contrary to custom in divulging other books, although perhaps I could nearly guess, yet because I would willingly offend none, I will now conceal.

About this time, however, the cultured and the vain rich began to look less askance upon play-dedications, though a few more years were to elapse before the old prejudice wholly disappeared. Only a few months after Burton wrote, Barnabe Barnes inscribed his sensational Globe play, *The Devils Charter*, unitedly to Sir William Herbert and Sir William Pope. About a year later, or in 1608, Chapman, who had already had half a dozen plays published, broke silence in dedicating his *Conspiracie and Tragedie of Charles Duke of Byron, Marshall of France* to Sir Thomas Walsingham and his son, though he took advantage of the opportunity to assure the father that the only reason why he had not so honoured him before was that he knew he 'ever stood little affected to these unprofitable rites of Dedication'.

Jonson's attitude towards these rites is of primary importance, because it largely explains the change which now took place in the general attitude, and, in evincing

its potency, shows that he held in his middle period, if not the absolutely highest position, a position equal to any in the hierarchy of dramatic poets. It is significant that he preserved his aloofness until early in 1607, when *Volpone*, in falling from the press, was preluded by an impassioned defence of the despised art of dramatic poetry, which had fallen into scurrility and decay through the contempt expressed for its professors, addressed by him with characteristic moral courage 'to the two most noble and most equal sisters, the two famous Universities, for their love and acceptance shewn to this poem in the presentation'. This remarkable epistle was, in all probability, the 'singular precedent' referred to by Burton, the publisher. If, as a trumpet-call for Justice, it cannot be said to have blown down the walls of prejudice, it certainly shook them to their very foundations. Once its cogency had bitten into the cultured mind, the literary enfranchisement of the self-respecting dramatist was his for the asking.

It is noteworthy that when *Cynthia's Revels* was issued in quarto in 1601, Jonson went to the trouble of having a private dedication specially printed on a separate leaf for insertion in a copy to be presented to his old school-master, William Camden. This copy, in which the dedicatory leaf was bound in between signatures A and A 2, is in the Kemble collection, and, when formerly at Chatsworth, was seen and examined by Mr. Percy Simpson. The privacy of the dedication is as much an indication that Jonson was as loth then to break away from prescribed custom as it is that Camden was averse from receiving openly a tribute of the kind. Even when Jonson came to dedicate *Every Man in his Humour* to his old mentor in the collected edition of his works issued in folio in 1616—and that at a time when play-dedications had

become acceptable to the highest—he saw fit to begin his epistle by saying:

There are, no doubt, a supercilious race in the world, who will esteem all office done you in this kind, an injury; so solemn a vice is it with them to use the authority of their ignorance, to the crying down of Poetry, or the professors: but my gratitude must not leave to correct their error; since I am none of those that can suffer the benefits conferred upon my youth to perish with my age.

An important digression here suggests itself, the matter being worthy of discussion. For a score of years past, scholars have agreed that the printed dedicatory sonnet to Sir Thomas Walsingham, found by Payne Collier in a copy of the first quarto of Chapman's *All Fools* (issued in 1605), is a forgery. This conclusion may now be questioned. It relies almost wholly on the fact that the sonnet is printed on an irregular-sized separate leaf, evidence which, if taken as proof positive of spuriousness, would invalidate not only the earlier Jonson-Camden dedication but a much later dedication of the sort. There happens to be extant a unique variant of Thomas Jordan's Caroline comedy, *Money is an Ass* (belatedly printed in 1668), in which the title has been altered to *Wealth Outwitted, or Money's an Ass*, and a rhymed dedication to John Philips substituted for the leaf containing the prologue and the actors' names.

It is nothing against the genuineness of the discredited sonnet that Chapman, in the dedication to *Byron's Conspiracie* already referred to, expresses his knowledge of Walsingham's dislike of public praise, since the absence of the sonnet leaf from other copies of the quarto admits of

the assumption that the dedication was of a private nature. Moreover, as Collier showed by his silence that he was unaware he was dealing with a private dedication, and was much too erudite not to be acquainted with the dedication to *Byron's Conspiracie*, the terms of the latter would surely have stayed his hand when forging the sonnet. And why should he have gone to the trouble of forging it? There was generally a purpose behind his frauds, yet he made no attempt to prove anything by its aid. Here are the lines he is presumed to have concocted:

'To my long-loved and honourable Friend, Sir Thomas Walsingham, Knight.

Should I expose to every common eye,
The least allow'd birth of my shaken brain;
And not entitle it particularly
To your acceptance, I were worse than vain.
And though I am most loth to pass your sight
With any such like mark of vanity;
Being mark'd with age for aims of higher weight,
And drown'd in dark death-ushering melancholy,
Yet lest by others' stealth it be imprest,
Without my passport, patch'd with others' wit,
Of two enforced ills I elect the least;
And so desire your love will censure it;
Though my old fortune keep me still obscure,
The light shall still bewray my old love sure.'

Strange that Collier did *not* point out in elucidation of his 'forgery' that Chapman's *Blind Beggar of Alexandria* had undoubtedly been published from a mutilated and surreptitious copy! If fraud there was, the evidence fails to establish it.

National prejudices in a slow-moving country are

difficult to eradicate, and it is not surprising that Ben Jonson's dignified remonstrance in *Volpone* took time to prove its efficacy. But it really only needed the authorized placing of some distinguished name before the epistle dedicatory of a common play for the reform to be effected; and it was singularly in keeping that that concession should eventually fall to Jonson himself. In 1611, we find him inscribing his *Cataline*, 'to the great example of honour and virtue, the most noble William, Earl of Pembroke', then Lord Chamberlain, in dignified, unsycophantic terms. 'Posterity', he tells him, 'may pay your benefit the honour and thanks, when it shall know that you dare in these jig-given times to countenance a legitimate poem'. From this on the shackles were removed, but, use being second nature, there were dramatists who for a time still felt them on their legs or were uneasy without them. Only a few months later, Chapman, in dedicating *The Widow's Tears* to Joseph Reed of Mitton, deemed it politic to begin with:

Sir, if any work of this nature be worth the presenting to friends worthy and noble, I presume this will not want much of that value. Other countrymen have thought the like worthy of dukes' and princes' acceptations; *Injusti Sdegnij*; *Il Pentamento Amoroso*; *Calisthe*, *Pastor Fido*, etc. (all being plays), were all dedicate to Princes of Italy'.

But the plea was weak, and should not have been indulged in. Chapman forgot that not one of these foreign works had been written for public performance, all having been inspired by sovereigns and acted purely for their delectation. At home, Daniel, as court poet, had been honoured in the same way. A little later, in 1613, Chap-

man is a trifle surer of his ground, but still thinks it necessary to advance the same argument. In his Epistle Dedicatory to Sir Thomas Howard, prefixed to *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, he writes:

Since works of this kind have been lately esteemed worthy the patronage of our worthiest nobles, I have made no doubt to prefer this of mine to your undoubted virtue, and exceeding true noblesse: as containing matter no less deserving your reading, and excitation to heroical life, than any such late dedication. Nor have the greatest princes of Italy and other countries conceived it any least diminution to their greatness to have their names winged with these tragic plumes, and dispersed by way of patronage through the most noble notices of Europe.

One would hardly surmise from this that the pass had already been won. But it seems not unlikely that whatever doubts lingered in the minds of the few poets as purblind as Chapman, the new-found dignity of the dramatist became stabilized by a slightly later event. In 1631, *Bartholomew Fair* was published with a title-page setting forth that it had been 'acted in the Yeare 1614 by the Lady Elizabeth's Servants. And then dedicated to King James of most Blessed Memorie; by the Author, Benjamin Jonson.' The dedication is missing, but the play was certainly performed at Court early in November 1614, and the Court prologue and epilogue are extant. Doubtless, rare old Ben then presented the King with a transcript of his piece in his own neat hand, together with the lost dedication. Whether or not the news got disseminated—and Jonson was not the man to hide his light under a bushel—the fact remains that from that time onwards

quasi-apologetic play-dedications disappear, and no dramatic poet worthy of the name had any particular difficulty in obtaining a dedicatee of consequence for his play.

For long, however, the honour vouchsafed to Jonson, in being the first dramatist permitted to inscribe an ordinary theatre piece to a reigning English monarch, remained unique. It is noteworthy, however, that when, in 1651, Cartwright's tragi-comedy, *The Siege, or Love's Convert*, was first published, it was accompanied by a verse-dedication to the martyred king. It would seem that the play had been acted before Charles during his final sojourn at Oxford, and that a transcript of the text, together with the dedication, had then been presented to him. Over half a century, however, was to elapse before the publication of the first indigenous play presenting a dedication to a living English king. That honour fell to Colley Cibber, who, in 1718, was permitted to inscribe *The Nonjuror* to George I. To signalize this act of royal condescension, an *édition de luxe* of the play, as well as the ordinary edition, was issued: the first of its kind. It was printed (appropriately enough) on Royal paper, stitched in marble paper, with gilt leaves—and the price was a modest half-crown.

L. A. PAVEY

NIKALDON

It is, of course, one thing to possess, like Nikaldon, the temperament of the imaginative brain-worker, and quite another to be a successful prose-writer. 'Obviously,' Nikaldon would have informed you, with a slow and supercilious stare. 'Success—what is it? When you come to me and find that my ideals change, then you may talk to me of success. It means nothing to me. I will pursue my career; for the rest——' He would shrug his shoulders in a manner to let you see that he was a good European. Nikaldon travelled; how, it was almost impossible to say, but he certainly did know every capital and major town of post-war Europe that had any impressions to offer. He never had any money; would have been offended, as one suspected of marching on the road to commercial success, if you thought he had. None of his employments, which were usually picked up casually and followed patchily in the polyglot quarters of cosmopolitan seaports, ever brought him in more than a bare subsistence, unless he happened to strike a fool of an employer who could not see that Nikaldon was of no use to him. But this usually jumped to the eye in the first hour of the day; Nikaldon's own greatest concern was that everybody should recognize him as a lost genius, condescending to work rather than to sell his soul in the wrong literary market (and that, according to the Nikaldonian version, was any market). He was confident about Posterity's awe and acclamation; therefore he did not trouble whether the patrons of the cafés which in various cities he made his own, believed or

disbelieved him; whether they listened out of admiration, mere politeness or the indolence of the drinker too comfortable to move. Nikaldon was beyond the influence of any opinion whatsoever.

Through having followed scores of occupations for many different masters in almost inconceivably varying milieus, he had learned (though even this had cost him some rebuffs and a few bouts of semi-starvation) never, at first, to admit that he was merely an artist unappreciated by the world, and must get a little money somehow. But beyond this negative wisdom he seldom got, even to the first stage in the gaining of his employer's confidence. Each gesture of his, each word and intonation, and particularly his manner of approach to the smallest job of manual labour, was redolent of the condescension of one who was not as other men. His fellow-workers, according to their own several temperaments and opportunities, clouded his head, threw things at him, laughed uproariously at him; or they became so weak with misplaced affection that they lived with him or supplied him gratis with food and drink. They either watched him goggle-eyed and reported him with opprobrious epithets to zealous local governing bodies; or with terms of unqualified approval to the secretaries of world committees or presidents at Communist headquarters. It mattered nothing to him, all this. Simply he was Nikaldon, whom Posterity would know, but whom his own times conspired to prevent from giving immortal prose to the world. And whatever the way in which he impinged on their susceptibilities, he was indifferent. They were the audience to the vast stage he had set; and he had no feeling save that they might count themselves lucky. Some of them obviously did not. Certain employers bade him abrupt adieux with

sharp-edged contumely; fellow-workers who had acquired skill at their tasks sometimes endeavoured to freeze him with contemptuous silence, broken at the last by a single comment or so intended to be blasting. He would laugh at them with an overwhelming incomprehension; and leave them, himself strengthened in his own conceits, bursting with astonishment or rage. He was thus aware of unusual ranges of invective in all European languages, in most patois, and in mixtures which you would have needed unlikely combinations of travel to have comprehended fully. And he regarded this awareness, proudly, as his right, as one of the hall-marks of his life-long difference from these base-born whom an inscrutable fate had condemned him to help in their filthy commercial chafferings.

If Nikaldon could have recalled one word of praise, however mistakenly given, for any of his varied but equally abhorred labours there is no doubt that his pride would have suffered a severe shock. But his record, on his looking back anxiously, was unsullied by any such thing. The line of demarcation between his helpless and inapplicable artistry and the universal and everlasting efficiency of all those tradesmen was clear and unbroken. And he lumped them all in as tradesmen: for him there was the Artist of all the Ages, represented by himself—and Eclipse. Longings in others, aspirations, deviations towards his own temperament, even his own type of imagination, mixed with the dross of anything more worldly, carried no weight with him, placed their possessors at once among those in the Pit. Nor could good works save them. Even the circus proprietor, who, every night after his show, had dragged out his worn Shakespeare, and was for ever staging and entirely failing with,

his own plays; even the frier of fish who could talk philosophy in three whole languages, four halves and two quarters, and who gave him absurdly extravagant wages for working a slicing machine (this even though Nikaldon's incompetence was of the profound type that can spread from the man and at once palsy the action of the machine, causing it to stutter and jib); even that wonderful delicatessen merchant who would entirely suspend a roaring trade, by shutting up shop for a whole evening, solely in order to listen to Nikaldon. He did not except them, any of them. The last-named had begged him to stay without even the pretence of work. . . . But he could not admit any real difference in any one member of that Rabble if he was to be true to himself and to his own fate.

Many of them, dull as they were, he had forgotten. He remembered better certain places and moments; the places not, usually, having any pretensions to beauty, being old and poor streets in obscure quarters, full of the kind of life he liked best to watch. Voices came to him, speaking many tongues, gay, sad, melancholy, strident, breathing life into the memories of all those queerly-peopled places where for short times he had lived, usually in the meanest kind of shake-down (his hours almost invariably being long) provided by his employer of the moment. He remembered some of those streets, narrow and close-packed, from which he had looked up at great cathedrals on rocky bastions, almost as ancient as the hills, the sudden flare of gorgeous sunsets picking them out in inky relief; others so high and steep that he must climb them by handrails, toil up them with goods for customers, exert himself incredibly in achieving the simplest errand. He puzzled himself, in retrospect, to know why people should

live like flies on a wall; why he himself, having unlimited choice, should ever have joined them. Nevertheless, he hated the plains and their sameness, eternally grey.

To those folk whom he met at cafés he was an oddity, for the reason that his world did not seem to contain any women. He did not even appear to observe that the worlds of some of his intimates contained little else. The fact was that Nikaldon was entirely obsessed with his career as a writer, and this although nothing that was known to his acquaintances permitted them even to identify it as a career. Nikaldon's talk to them they thought astounding, because of its quantity, its variety, and its omissions alike; just as most of his employers had. His leisure, though not his money, seemed at times to be infinite.

It happened that a customer at a certain shop of very special toilet soaps, in which Nikaldon found himself employed (only, of course, through the colossal lack of judgement of the proprietor, which had been accentuated by a slight but distinct inebriation at the moment of the engagement) found more than usual interest in this peculiar assistant's variations on the theme of 'neglected genius', repeated, had he but known, for the thousandth time.

Something unusual in the visitor himself made the man of genius uncomfortable. He eyed him so steadily—was it sardonically?—spoke not at all, or with only a word or two. And after the monologue he saw to it that the assistant, despite his preoccupations with his theme, served him reasonably efficiently (a diversion which Nikaldon naturally hated), and disappeared after one steady last look at him which caused him positively to stutter. A temporary lapse only, but—to stutter! Nikaldon was furiously

angry with himself, that his self-command should have been thus undermined. He was more incensed, for some queer reason, than he had been at all the seas of abuse that long-suffering employers had poured on his impenitent head. He had taken these as his right, tributes that marked him off from the usual run of commercial slave. He would have been annoyed had they been withheld. He still remembered how he had hurled a specimen tin of small fish, preserved in particularly messy oil, at the head of a bland and patronizing employer whose tone when he told him—Nikaldon—that he was ‘getting on nicely—a little smarter and more attentive, and he’d soon make quite a grocer of him’—was altogether too much for the poise he had built for himself through so many bitter years. Mere insults he would have accepted with that maddening smile of his that had so often turned his adversaries perfectly white with rage. But to be encouraged by that stuffed and imbecile carcass! He had rushed out, after one yell of passion, far from the painful scene. . . .

That customer who had broken down Nikaldon’s defences returned the next day to his shop. It was in the Rue de Rome in Marseilles, and crowds were surging past the door to and from the Cannebière. Some came inside to annoy Nikaldon by buying soaps. He got rid of them quickly, angrily, with anything. It didn’t matter to him—and his proprietor was out guzzling at a café somewhere. The midday heat filled even the carefully screened shop, and in the middle of this and a little knot of customers, who all seemed to want things the whereabouts of which Nikaldon had forgotten, that man who had reduced him to so much less than himself turned up again.

And he merely looked at Nikaldon, without even the

polite pretence that he had come for soap, or scent, or oil, or pomade.

'I would like to talk to you,' he said.

'Why?' asked Nikaldon, recovering his boldness.

'I want you to come with me on my boat.'

'All right,' said Nikaldon, casually, 'I'll come now.'

But this upstanding man gave him a look which annoyed him furiously, waved his hand lightly round the shop (in which were seven customers), and commanded him abruptly, 'Finish off here. See your employer. And come to me at seven o'clock this evening—the yacht *Renée*, in the Vieux Port.'

Again Nikaldon experienced that cold wave of helpless rage; again he stuttered. But he knew he would have to go. He flung all sorts of impossible things at indignant customers. Some forgot their indignation as Nikaldon waved them out, grandly, his thoughts far from such mundane matters as payment. His proud soul had to endure, that afternoon, the bibulous advances of M. Binet, the proprietor, who had spent too long at his café, but whose geniality waned as he grew less vinous. He even acquired a suspicion that the money in the till did not represent the value of all the missing goods. He made up his mind to check the takings that evening, not knowing that Nikaldon had already decided to leave this, the one hundred and sixteenth job he had held during the last ten years.

* * * *

It was true that, even after a fortnight spent at sea with Monsieur Fenayrol, Nikaldon still could not understand his position, nor why his master had, so to speak, publicly abducted him. His duties were of the lightest; and often,

he could not but see, merely invented. Strangely enough, this disturbed him, discouraged him, shook his audacious soul. He who had spent so many years in perfecting the technique of work-dodging was uneasy at being met more than half-way. He felt sadly that it interfered with all the rules of the game.

His employer watched him, too, in that way of his which had rendered him so uneasy, and which had, as a matter of fact, led him captive simply because he had promised himself that, at some critical moment, he would assert himself and astonish that man who seemed to see into him a little too deeply. But the moment did not come. Simple jobs performed with hopeless incompetence, with the sort of perverse, yet knowing, idiocy which had so often in the past driven employers to the very verge of frenzy, merely caused M. Fenayrol either to acquire a quiet, yet most discomfiting smile; or sometimes, when he did not know that Nikaldon was aware of his presence, to sink into almost helpless laughter, quite unfeigned. To Nikaldon's limitless disgust, it even seemed that on these occasions he was affording his employer keen pleasure, of which he could not imagine the cause. Something subtle and psychological, something within himself, he felt uncomfortably, which had been a thousand miles beyond the perceptions of his café associates, but which seemed to afford easy discovery to this man of penetration. Nikaldon felt more and more convinced that he had been carried off, body and soul, into this Mediterranean cruise for some purpose which to him remained a mystery.

Now and again Monsieur Fenayrol (leaning over the polished handrail like an old friend of his) would engage him concerning his literary work, asking him quiet but persistent questions about those unpublished master-

pieces which Nikaldon had, he said, packed away in a room of a house in Toulouse. Questions concerning their conception, the trials of the writer trailing over Europe, with only odd hours to give to their fashioning, the impossibility of securing publication of this work, specialized and tendential, yet aflame with genius that was cosmic, through a commercialized Press. . . . He probed and probed deeply, with sudden twists, with questions which led to regions his victim himself had hardly dared to explore. Yet, strangely, when one of these intimate revelations had been quietly terminated by his master, his exultation would suddenly leave him, and he would once more be left struggling desperately against the belief that M. Fenayrol held over him a power which had reduced him so that in his presence he was without compass or direction. His one glorious dream fell to the realization of the dust and ashes of non-fulfilment.

Why, he asked himself in anger, should this rich loafer on a yacht, merely because he had leisure and money, be able to torment him? A man, so far as he knew, with no work of any sort to his credit, let alone creative work of the calibre of his own. It seemed to him the last and worst of his oppressions. With his commercial employers he could at least feel that they had no notion of what his real work meant. Occasionally, even, his reputation in his own circles had exacted from them the unwilling but flattering tributes of the half-educated. But before M. Fenayrol, who had so far as he knew not the slightest authority to judge any kind of literature (even the stuff of the magazines on which the almost illiterate masses were fed), he felt as though his very soul lay bare. And not only that; as though it was continually shrinking in size. It was not even that his employer said anything derogatory. If he

had, Nikaldon felt that he could have become fiercely and adequately expansive. No; he just asked questions, listened, pierced him with gimlet eyes, and said—almost nothing. Why? Why did he do this?

‘That must,’ observed M. Fenayrol on one occasion, ‘be a large room in Toulouse in which you have housed your masterpieces. You have worked hard for many years.’

‘Oh! as for mere expanse. . . . It is of quality, not quantity, M’sieur, that you should speak.’

‘Ah! precisely. . . .’

And the intonation of that one word ‘precisely’ set Nikaldon, the hired retainer, almost dancing with rage. It was all he could do to prevent himself from committing battery and assault upon the person of his master.

It was because he considered that the limit of endurance had been reached that he left the yacht at Constantinople, left without a word to anybody, and without any request for wages. He became immediately a warehouseman; and within a few weeks again of the expected happening (a violent severing of amicable relations with its foreman) an odd man in one of those strange mixed stores near the quays.

And so on, again. Within the next year he had once more wandered through half the towns of Southern Europe. And his self-respect was restored by the gradual obliteration of the bitter memories of that impossible M. Fenayrol, and his own increasing appreciation of his genius, fostered as it was by old friends and newly-made café acquaintances wherever he liked to turn. His tongue was undoubtedly of silver; his pen, he thought, of gold. Once more by virtue of his unique powers he bestrode his own domain, like a prince who has wandered and

come back to his kingdom. His contempt for the material-minded world with which he was surrounded, and which his poor labours were supposed to serve, grew boundless. It seemed to him that it needed his mere touch to secure the complete destruction of all that it stood for. He lived on a minimum, it goes without saying—he truly never wanted more.

It is, of course, when one's fortune is inflated and rosy-hued that punctures, flattening disaster may be near. With the exception of the Fenayrol episode, it had seemed to Nikaldon that his genius had received no check. The material vicissitudes of his wandering life were all, of course, beneath his serious notice. They were but flashing facets of the peculiarly twirling and varied surface he showed to the world, hiding from it the profundities which it could never appreciate. And to him also there came the shock of the shaft aimed at the majesty and mystery of an inner life that meant more to him than all the world.

Arrived at Marseilles once more, a year after his departure on M. Fenayrol's yacht—a Nikaldon unchanged, more than ever inseparable from his individual manner of life, more than ever inalienably bound for that difficult goal of his, so obscure to the multitude—he found in the course of the satisfaction of his interest in current literature that M. Francqueville had written another book. He esteemed M. Francqueville. M. Francqueville, in his opinion, was possessed, almost alone among modern novelists, of something of his own austere artistry. There were slight differences, of course. One was, of course, that he considered himself a supreme master—whereas M. Francqueville did the best that was in him. Another was that M. Francqueville published books regularly, one

every eight or nine months; we already know of Nikaldon's record, and of his opinion of the printed word.

He read the book. He had acquaintances of the café who would have gone to the extreme length of buying a book had they thought that otherwise they would not have heard Nikaldon's scalding views on it. But on this occasion they did not hear them. Something unprecedented happened. For the short time that Nikaldon remained among them, he was bewildered, gloomy, and silent. He scarcely opened his mouth.

For Nikaldon, reading the book, had first been impressed by the magnificent rendering of the chief character, a literary upstart. Literary upstarts being his own pet theme, his delight was unbounded. There were traits he recognized at every turn. Furthermore, and strangely, he knew so many places that this man also knew. At last, together with a fellow-writer, this impostor took a long sea-voyage for his health. And from that point Nikaldon was reading an episode from his own biography; of those wretched weeks when M. Fenayrol had abducted him (he put it so now), and established his devastating ascendancy over him. And on that voyage a companion of the lost man cross-examined and excoriated him, turned him inside out. Here and there was a phrase that Nikaldon vividly remembered as one of the few that had fallen from the lips of M. Fenayrol. Then came incidents that he remembered; and brilliant studies of phases of his own impotent disgust.

It was clear now, too clear. But he could not put the book down until he had read the last word of the last chapter; of the final burying of the upstart in his ignominy, his world shattered, his achievement written down in black and white as a wholly negative one . . . And this

man, said M. Francqueville unequivocally, had rooms in Toulouse where masterpieces were supposed to be kept; but which contained nothing but a little rubbish, none of it quite completed, and grandiose plans for world-shattering books to come.

He did not need to be shown M. Francqueville to identify his old master. But incredibly, it might seem, he had never known the truth about himself, until this terrific exposition taught him.

His world knew him no more. What they never would have believed, though their conjectures were many and wildly romantic, was that Nikaldon no longer wandered. He lived in one southern city thereafter, in the same house, in the same room. And under another name he kept the same situation, a faithful servant to a small shopkeeper, for the next and last twenty years of his life.

READERS' REPORTS

NEW NOVELS

There are few modern writers who will cause the literary historian more perplexity than Mr. David Garnett, author of *Lady into Fox*—author of *Lady into Fox*, I say, because a new Mr. Garnett is gradually struggling out of the chrysalis of his older self. How far he will ever be able to leave behind him the devastating memory of that early triumph, it is at present hard to decide. *Man in the Zoo*, with its ingenious and satirical theme, had the somewhat unhappy air of trying and usually failing to live up to the standards of a brilliant elder brother. *The Sailor's Return* was an enjoyable little book and contained several pages of charming landscape. *Go She Must!* was a compromise and, as such, not particularly successful. *No Love* (Chatto. 7s. 6d.) is a better story than all three; the writing is less obviously *decorative*, the approach less evasive, the author's characteristic whimsicalities are under stricter control. His personages are solidier and, if we are still not quite persuaded that they actually live, the atmosphere of dream- or half-life in which they have their being, is skilfully and consistently maintained. Thus the whole book, the study of a pair of young men growing up side by side and of their opposing temperaments, produces the effect as of a real situation faithfully reflected on a sensibility itself curiously remote from the problems and conflicts of the real world—or as of a true story related by a novelist so thoroughly imbued in fantasy that, while his narrative is beautifully concise and regular, it always just misses the immediacy and tragic sharpness of the truth.

By comparison, Mr. Glenway Westcott's stories,

Good-bye, Wisconsin (Cape. 7s. 6d.), are strangely diffuse and untidy, but, on the other hand, agreeably youthful and fresh. 'I should like to learn to write', he declares at the beginning of the first, 'in a style . . . without slang . . . a style of rapid grace for the eye rather than sonority for the ear, in accordance with the ebb and flow of sensation.' All is fluid; the intention of the story is often excellent (see, for example, a story called *Adolescence*), but his execution of it is generally jagged or frayed. He gives me the impression of being one of those very rare American novelists capable of drawing on their richly polyglot background without slavish reference to accepted European modes.

Of Alain-Fournier's novel, *Le Grand Meaulnes*, translated as *The Wanderer* (Constable. 7s. 6d.), it is difficult to write with moderation. You will find it either detestable or else altogether entrancing. Fournier was killed in the War. Mr. Havelock Ellis has supplied a foreword in which he records his own admiration and gives a succinct and informative account of the author's personality and life. He mentions Fournier's kinship with Laforgue; both were obscure and exacting characters, both lonely, and both cultivated that upright, almost puritanical reserve which is the predestined armour of certain diffident and passionate spirits. *Le Grand Meaulnes* also shows a considerable resemblance to Gérard de Nerval's *Sylvie*. Like *Sylvie*, it is penetrated by the storyteller's great love for the district in which he passed his childhood—the Sologne, a region of fens and rushy lakes, woodland and dilapidated manor-houses, their turreted roofs glimpsed over the fir-trees. Like *Sylvie*, it deals with a contemplative passion, flourishing in absence and solitude, but which satisfaction can only destroy—otherwise it is nearly impossible to describe; it reminded me now and then of

André Gide's *Isabelle*—the same limpid sentimentality, the same underlying sophistication which make the naïveté of the telling, the purity of the emotions which it concerns, seem at moments even a little perverse. The translation is fairly good, though the transposition of French into English schoolboy slang is sometimes infelicitous.

Three German war books put an American effort severely back into its place. Of these the best is Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Putnam. 7s. 6d.). It is a terrible document; Remarque belongs to a generation, he says, which lost its youth upon the battlefields and is henceforward condemned to lead purposeless, casual, disoriented lives. He stresses the squalor and ghastly tedium of modern war, the disillusionment of young soldiers among mud and wire-entangled corpses and a thousand appalling shapes of slow putrefaction and sudden death. His book sounds the same vivid, accusatory note as the finest of Siegfried Sassoon's early war poems. Though his material is largely autobiographical, Remarque is a true novelist. Like Dostoevsky in his account of his prison experiences, from his indictment of human cruelty and confusion Remarque manages to extract a kind of pitiful inhuman splendour. A good writer and an admirable propagandist, his skill is shared in different degrees by Ludwig Renn (*War. Secker. 7s. 6d.*) and by Ernst Jünger (*The Storm of Steel. Chatto. 7s. 6d.*). Of the last two I prefer Renn, with his graphically picturesque description of those first fumbling engagements which preceded the period of trench warfare, outposts groping their way through the flowery unmapped countryside. But all three books deserve to be read; as for Mr. James B. Wharton's *Squad*

(*Lane. 7s. 6d.*), it is not a bad novel, but suffers inevitably from such imposing companionship.

The Book Society and its distinguished committee presumably know best, but what can it have been, I wonder, which induced them to choose Valentine Kataer's satirical novel, *The Embezzlers* (*Benn. 7s. 6d.*)? This product of the U.S.S.R. is an exuberant farce broadly reminiscent of Gogol with an incidental touch of Georges Courteline. It deals with the adventures of a defalcating accountant and cashier, their flight to Lenin-grad, their debauches and eventual disappointment. Here again is Gogol's brutal *verve*, gourmand of sordid and ridiculous detail. It is a readable book though depressing; and I was glad to turn to an English novel which depresses me without any pretensions to making me laugh, Rosalind Murray's *Hard Liberty* (*Chatto. 7s. 6d.*), the sort of dreary intimate chronicle which women novelists do so relentlessly and so well—the failure of a weak and clever man slipping step by step down into the abysses of poverty—a novel, in short, which I should only recommend to readers whose emotional and financial equilibrium was exceptionally sound. Others can fall back on the supreme unreality of Anne Douglas Sedgwick's *Dark Hester* (*Constable. 7s. 6d.*) and learn of the existence of young ladies with long ear-rings and long cigarette-holders, understood to be 'awfully modern', and the cultured and delicate elderly women with whom they come into conflict—on Naomi Mitchison's exciting collection of historical stories, *Barbarian Stories* (*Cape. 7s. 6d.*)—on John Eyton's *Mr. Ram* (*Arrowsmith. 7s. 6d.*), a novel written entirely in *oratio obliqua*, recounting the pathetic love-affair of an Oxford servant-girl and a nostalgic Indian student; on Peadar O'Donell's *Adrigool*

(*Cape. 7s. 6d.*)—for those who enjoy simple and sincerely written stories of peasant life; on Milton Waldman's *The Disinherited*, a book to which the theme of racial conflict, Gentile versus Jew, gives an impressive and forceful quality. P.

Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, by Joseph Redlich. (Macmillan. 15s.) This book has certain obvious superficial defects. Dr. Redlich does not tell a story well, and though he has a remarkable command of English, it is not a very good kind of English. Moreover, he constantly assumes more knowledge of detail than even a well-informed foreign reader can be expected to possess. Here is an example: 'Magyar political imperiousness burst into full flame when the struggle against the young Croation [*sic*] national idea broke out in the Diet at Pressburg'. True and important; but here, and in many other places, the English reader will have the feeling that he is reading the commentary on a text which is missing. In both respects, style and lucidity, Dr. Redlich's work contrasts unfavourably with Mr. Simpson's *Rise of Napoleon III (Longmans. 15s.)*, which I am glad to see in its third impression. Both writers are masters of their subject, and can be thoroughly trusted. But Mr. Simpson has written one of the most entertaining histories of our generation, and that is just the quality which Dr. Redlich has not been able to infuse into his weighty essay.

The fault lies partly in the subject. Franz Joseph was a dreary monarch. Twice in his life, as a young man in love and as an old man unbroken by more than the sorrows of Priam, he attracted a certain half-affectionate, half-curious interest and respect. But, as Dr. Redlich reiterates, he was impersonal, an embodied idea. Unlike

his fellows of the Romanov, Hohenzollern and Bonaparte dynasties, he was wholly without imagination or generous ambition. I need not say that Dr. Redlich has the true historian's disdain for the keyhole, and never condescends to spice his pages with revelations. His book is less a biography—for which, indeed, the materials are surprisingly scanty—than a study which, in the end, becomes a condemnation, of the Austrian idea. No one living can compare with Dr. Redlich either in knowledge or personal experience of the subject, and his book, read in that sense, will be found to be a piece of historic criticism of high and lasting significance.

For the Austrian idea—and this is the European significance of the Austrian collapse—turns out on analysis to be the negation of an idea. Not to think, not to look ahead, not to remember that nations have a past and demand a future, this was the Hauspolitik of Franz Joseph. Somehow or other, in intricate ways which might have been made clearer, Germans, Magyars, Czechs, Poles, Croats, Rumanians, and Italians, and some odds and ends, with different cultures, languages, traditions, ideals, and institutions, had come under the Hapsburgs, and somehow or other under the Hapsburgs they had to be kept. Finlay, surveying Europe in 1855, declared that Austria was Byzantine: scientific administration (and the Austrian bureaucracy was both capable and disinterested) applied with no regard to the ideas of the subject-races; in particular, with no regard to the ascendant ideas of the age, responsible government and nationalism. A unitary empire was possible, if the Magyar could be constrained to abandon his ancient constitution. A federal constitution was possible if the Magyar and the Austrian could be induced to recognize

the Czech and the Southern Slav as equals. But, whether federal or unitary, some centre of attraction had to be provided to counteract the nationalist pull which was drawing the subject-races into other orbits, and which in the end burst the Empire into fragments. At each point the Austrian idea proved inadequate. The unitary empire was tried: with the help of Russian bayonets and Haynau's whips the Hungarian constitution was suppressed. The federal solution was not tried: the Magyar revived, and under Deák's guidance (Deák is the one statesman of real capacity with whom Franz Joseph had to deal) the Dual System was established. But in the eyes of all who were not Magyars or Germans, the Dual System came to little more than this, that the Magyar should ride roughshod over his Croats, Rumanians, and Slovaks, while the Austrian scientifically suppressed his Slovenes, Czechs, and Poles. Dr. Redlich lays his finger on the Language Ordinance of 1897 as the fatal moment: rather than concede a very modest measure of equality to the Czechs, the Germans took first to obstruction, then to sedition, and finally made constitutional government impossible. 'From this moment the Hapsburg realm was doomed.' Meanwhile, the Italian provinces had gone: Hapsburg had been shouldered out of Germany in the interests of Hohenzollern, and the fatal allurements of compensation in the Balkans was drawing Vienna gradually across the line where a conflict with Russia was inevitable.

The Decline of the Age of Louis XIV; or French Literature, 1687-1715, by Arthur Tilley. (Cambridge. 25s.) Mr. Tilley has already written a number of interesting books upon French literature, but I cannot remember reading any of

them with greater pleasure than this. As a picture of the years of transition between the apogee of Louis XIV and what we might call the eighteenth century proper, years of growing revolt against absolutism, whether monarchical, religious or literary, it is remarkably complete, for Mr. Tilley has not omitted the background of social history, without which no study of a period's literature can be either instructive or amusing. Literary critics who are prone to divorce their writer from his surroundings might well take a lesson from Mr. Tilley, whose knowledge is both wide and deep.

Briefly, the period in question is a secondary one. The brilliant efflorescence of the seventeenth century is already a thing of the past, while the eighteenth is but budding. Molière has been dead for years; Corneille and La Rochefoucauld are dead; the work of La Fontaine, Racine, Madame de Sévigné, and Madame de Lafayette is practically over. Of great writers there are but La Bruyère—pessimistically facing the situation with his 'tout est dit'—Saint-Simon, the publication of whose *Memoirs* belong to later in the eighteenth century, and Fénelon, who nowadays is strangely little read. The lesser lights include Bayle, Fontenelle, Massillon, Jean-Baptiste Rousseau and Crébillon *père*, hedged in by a host of writers who, if they possessed little or no creative genius, had yet great powers of observation and an interesting variety of styles. An essentially prosaic period, this is also in many ways an experimental one, and very far from dull. Mr. Tilley has written a fine chapter on La Bruyère, whose influence he traces in 'whole departments of literature' throughout the eighteenth century, and a very amusing one on Madame de Maintenon, of whom he takes an unexpectedly sympathetic view.

To pilot the reader through a mass of second-rate literature can have been no easy task, but so well has Mr. Tilley succeeded that his scholarly and detailed work will probably be read with pleasure by people who have never opened most of the books he discusses. And lovers of French literature may find themselves face to face with several writers of whom they have not so much as heard.

Living, by Henry Green. (Dent. 7s. 6d.) This novel makes a distinct impression. Neither in form nor matter can precedent be found for it. Though an occasional reader may dislike either its literary technique or its ruthlessly detached presentation of human character, he must go on reading it.

The book deals with a group of workmen in a Birmingham factory, and their womenfolk. Mr. Green left Oxford in his second year and retired to Birmingham, there to work under conditions, and associate with men and women, such as he now describes. He adopted this course, not because his parents were suddenly ruined, or because he wished to 'start at the beginning' like all future millionaires; but because he wished to study the working-classes simply and solely as literary material. Thus he presents them neither as beasts, martyrs, nor anti-capitalists, but as normal human beings, true to the verities of the English character, exhibiting the foibles and prejudices peculiar to all close communities. His detachment is that of an anthropologist engrossed with aborigines. But anthropologists are not artists and Mr. Green is. He seeks beauty and discovers it.

In general form, the book is built on a number of different themes, identified with various groups of men and women, who are linked together by a common

centre: the works. The chapters are divided into sections, which pick up the different themes, yet preserve their continuity by their relation to the centre. In detail, the style seems at first to have borrowed something from Mr. James Joyce. But the industrial context, and the lucid coherence of the whole composition, seem equally to excuse it—if excuse be needed. Gradually the affectation ceases to be an affectation. It forms a natural harmony with the speech of the Birmingham workman. For it is in the conversations that the outstanding merit of the book lies. They are almost poetry. And at the same time, the reader knows instinctively, they are real.

Thirty-two Poems, by E. R. Dodds. (Constable. 3s. 6d.) The metrical technique of these poems is practically flawless. (I think I should have omitted the 'practically' but for 'Croagh Patrick's screes'—too realistic!) To slur, not once or twice in a poem as constrained to, but either never or with some regularity—to use a decently consistent prosody, in fact—few contemporary poets in this or kindred refinements show anything approaching so true an ear as Mr. Dodds. Internal rhyming, beautifully done, page 37. The poetical technique is also very skilled and subtle; witness, for instance, pages 16, 25, 31, 39 (fine ending), 47 (good poem, though not *my* experience of mountaineering). Dull are 32–3, 46. Beautiful, a term rarely applicable to modern poetry, suggests itself for many a stanza. Mr. Dodds's work is thoughtful, curious, Irish (but only a little and unobtrusively), wistful, and, in fact, a trifle bemused by its own philosophy. He sees Sense and Spirit, but his Spirit is of a tenuous and spectral quality. He seems to know of the impulsive life below Reason rather than of any impulsive life which includes

Reason and transcends it. Contrast, for example, his love-poems with Marvell's. Both are 'curious', but Marvell's have also wit, a product (I make bold to think) of passion; Mr. Dodds's is introspective. But no fancier can afford to overlook this book—with its clever preface.

A Bagdad Chronicle, by Reuben Levy, M.A. (Cambridge University Press. 15s.) This book contains a good deal of interesting and amusing detail, but it lacks the breadth of treatment demanded by the subject, and the material is neither well arranged nor critically selected. It purports to be a social history of Bagdad—a history, that is, of the manners, customs, opinions, knowledge and ideals of the inhabitants, together with an account of the building and growth of the actual city, and the needful explanatory political facts. It seems to be intended for the general reader, but falls between two stools, being neither entertaining enough for a light book, nor serious enough for a scholarly one. In any case, it would have been much improved by the inclusion of more actual translations from contemporary works; for instance, the *Kitab-al-Aghani*, and the *Kitab-al-Muwashsha*. One is haunted throughout by an uncomfortable uncertainty as to whether one is meant to feel amused, shocked, or edified.

SHORT OR LONG?

Not so long ago, a journal of standing committed itself to the opinion, after reading Father Knox's collection of detective stories, that the short story, in this genre, was incomparably better than the long novel—the long novel, it was suggested, being, in the majority of cases, simply a short story padded out with irrelevant matter in order to achieve a seven-and-sixpenny length. I have not read

Father Knox's collection; but after having read *Mr. Fortune Speaking*, by H. C. Bailey (*Ward, Lock. 7s. 6d.*), to say nothing of other sheaves of short stories, I should be inclined to qualify that dictum very strongly.

Two elements of truth it certainly has. The first lies in the fact that, rightly or wrongly, publishers (or is it circulating libraries?) assume that the reading public does not like volumes of short stories—and any book which contains more than one story, even if it be made up of one story 50,000 words long and one story 25,000 words long, counts as a book of short stories for this purpose. The publisher, therefore, will only pay for a book of short stories about one-quarter to one-third of the advance which he is willing to give on a long novel; and the author who has thought of a plot or plots suitable for a short story, must either puff them out to long novel length or keep the wolf from the door by issuing them first in magazines. Now the magazine market, in England at any rate, is highly standardized as to length. Magazines like stories of 5,000 to 6,000 words in length; anything longer nauseates them slightly; and gobbets of more than 10,000 words they will not swallow at all. Hence, for practical purposes, the poor author has the choice between 7,000 or 70,000 words; and the middle-length story, which would be an admirable vehicle for many detective plots, must either be blown out to suit the publisher, or mutilated to suit the magazine.

It is the blown-out story, the story into which irrelevant murders, chases, and love-affairs have been introduced in a desperate attempt to delay the inevitable last chapter, which has roused the ire of the journal mentioned above; and to this extent I agree with the writer, though I could mention at least a dozen novels of last winter's

publishing which are not liable to that stricture in the very smallest degree. Where I join issue with him is in disliking equally the mutilated story, or, to put it with strict accuracy, the story which has been given no chance to be a story at all. The only case, apart from rare exceptions, of the good short detective story is that in which the writer has a particular trick or craft of detection which can be infinitely repeated and can give pleasure at each repetition. 'You-know-my-methods': Holmes is, of course, the first exemplar of this, and Dr. Thorndyke is another. All the Thorndyke short stories centre upon a single incident, to which only Thorndyke has the key, and whose explanation *in itself* provides the reader with his pleasure. A man is drowned in a ditch full of duckweed, but his stomach is full of duckweed of the wrong species; a boot-lace is not a boot-lace, but a hair from an elephant's tail; the blood on a man's handkerchief comes, not from a human, but from a camel—all these are instances of an *expertise* which surprises and delights the reader without any further trimmings. We do not require to know the character of the man who swallowed the duckweed, or the psychology of the camel; all we want is 'a yard and a half of Dr. Thorndyke, please', and that is good enough. Also, as only one reader in a million could possibly anticipate Dr. Thorndyke's discoveries, there is needed only the barest minimum of arrangement to enable the secret to be kept as long as is required.

But the majority of detectives are not Thorndykes, and cannot call in black magic to help them. They must use ordinary human means, foot-prints, thumb-prints, etc., about which the jaded reader knows as much as they do; and they must therefore create an atmosphere of sorts—even pretend to create characters—in order to conceal

from that reader what is really happening. Now, in 5,000 to 7,000 words there is no room to do this *and* to have a decent plot. One or the other must go, with the result that the reader is given, either a piece of atmosphere with a ludicrous plot, or the bare bones of a plot—an extract, it would seem, from the novelist's note-book, without a story.

Mr. Bailey, like Miss Sayers, chooses the former course. His Mr. Fortune is a figure, a character like those of Theophrastus, and if you read his book you are expected to like reading about Mr. Fortune, no matter what he does—and in this book the plots are really absurd. To a certain extent he succeeds. I do not myself particularly care for Mr. Fortune; I greatly prefer Lord Peter Wimsey as a creation; but he is certainly a recognizable object. I should like to see, however, what Mr. Bailey could do with a story sufficiently long to require a plot as well as a detective.

Mr. Van Dine is an author who, quite frankly, beats me. For three months, I gather, he was a best seller in those United States; but that is all I understand about the phenomenon. I can understand that his extremely ugly style would not be a drawback; I can understand even that his remarkable bits of Culture for the Million, his footnotes and short bibliographies on chess, psychoanalysis and whatnot, might provide a certain spurious attraction for some people; but of the qualities which are ordinarily supposed to make a best seller I can find no trace. That being so, I suppose I must admit myself not qualified to criticize Mr. Van Dine, and will content myself with remarking that I do not think *The Bishop Murder Case* (Cassell. 7s. 6d.) so good a specimen of his work as some. The crimes seem to me uninteresting, the

atmosphere of horror over-worked up, and the murderer too obvious.

For the rest, the month's collection, though copious, is not good. The best is Mr. Neil Gordon's *The Silent Murders* (Longmans. 7s. 6d.), which is a workmanlike story of adequate interest. It suffers a little because the author (probably in all innocence) has used exactly the same motive as that of another book which appeared about a couple of years ago. But it was so good a motive as to be well worth using twice, and the characters and incidents are plausible.

The Strange Disappearance of Mary Young, by Milton R. Propper (Harrap. 7s. 6d.), is a competent American story of the second class. The suspects are particularly well managed. The book is quite conventional, in style, plot, and character; but it outrages no sensibilities, and holds the attention perfectly well for a couple of hours. Another American work, *The Patient in Room 18*, by M. G. Eberhardt (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.), attracts attention by the excellence of its atmosphere and the nonsensical character of its plot. The teller of the story (a matron in a hospital) is well done, and the night of storm with which the book opens excellent—but the plot! I do not myself know how American hospital doctors behave, and this novel may be true to facts; if so, it is no wonder that their X-ray apparatus explodes.

The Ginger Cat, by Christopher Reeve (Collins. 7s. 6d.), is a shocker which makes no pretence of being a detective novel. It gets along quite quickly; it has plenty of alarming situations; and its villains are adequately sinister. It is not a bad specimen of its class. *The Trout Inn Tragedy*, by Winifred Greenleaves (Collins. 7s. 6d.), does aim at being a detective novel, but it is, oh, so young and innocent!

Eventually the criminal, finding no other way of getting detected, has to kidnap the detective in a car, and confess to him for hours. This book is not badly written, but it is too naive for words. Finally, Mr. Fielding has turned up again, with his Inspector Pointer and all his other characteristics, in *The Mysterious Partner* (Collins. 7s. 6d.), which is better than *The Cluny Problem*, but not much better. Mr. Fielding has brains, but could he not possibly provide himself with a collaborator who has a sense of probability and a sense of humour?

Mr. Guy Chapman's edition of *Vathek* (Constable. 2 vols. 31s. 6d.) is remarkable alike for the care with which it has been edited and the skill with which it has been printed. Undoubtedly it is the best edition of Beckford's extraordinary tale, as it is also the most complete, for the long-lost Episodes have been incorporated into it for the first time, and it is now possible to review the romance in the form and in the language that its author originally intended it to appear. That it was never published in its present form can be attributed to two causes: Beckford's disgust when his friend Henley printed a surreptitious translation, and his natural indolence. It is very likely that Beckford merely made Henley's impertinence an excuse for his own laziness, that he was bored with the Episodes, and never wished to work them into the main story. *Vathek* itself was composed in a spell of enthusiasm, following a fantastic house-party to celebrate his twenty-first birthday; the Episodes were an afterthought, and were written at odd moments during a Continental tour. The ecstasy produced by the Oriental-cum-Gothic entertainment at Fonthill soon burnt itself out, and could not be revived in Lausanne, and Beckford had to admit his

failure to make Oriental silk out of Wiltshire sows' ears. The Episodes, which are related to the Caliph Vathek after his arrival in the infernal paradise, are duller than the dullest tales in the *Arabian Nights*, and through them all the cumbersome machinery of djinns and peris creaks and groans more loudly than the supernatural effects in the *Castle of Otranto*. And yet even the malicious machinations of spirits are tolerable compared with the perpetual luxury of roses and carbuncles, the splendour as unrivalled and as superficial as in the grandest hôtels de luxe.

Into the tale of Vathek, however, Beckford introduced a saving irony that is utterly lacking in the Episodes, and by virtue of this quality *Vathek* deserves its place among the minor masterpieces of French satire. The wit is eighteenth century, the wit and scepticism of Voltaire's romances or Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*, but the form is romantic and belongs to a later age, the early years of the romantic revival, the *exotisme* of Chateaubriand and the melancholy of Mme. de Staël. It is the union of these two qualities and the control they exert upon one another that make *Vathek* a work of peculiar genius, in which neither wit nor romance is allowed to predominate. There are, indeed, few stories in which this combination is more successfully affected. Like *Alice in Wonderland*, it is a tale that will bring children from their play and old men from the chimney corner.

Dodsworth is good Sinclair Lewis (*Cape. 7s. 6d.*), just as *Expiation* is good 'Elizabeth and her German Garden' (*Macmillan. 7s. 6d.*). Whether or not you enjoy these two novels will depend upon your previous feeling for their authors. *Dodsworth* is brilliantly 'readable'; there can be

no doubt of that. Yet, while the figures of Sam Dods-worth and his wife are conceived with an admirable roundness and solidity, the European society into which they make their adventurous plunge, seems to be largely composed of stock types, the engaging Middle-European count who has been compelled to learn a trade, and an Englishman, in eye-glass and tweeds, who has been studied, not from life, but straight from Alfred Jingle! The quarrels of an ambitious, shallow wife and a retiring, good-natured husband are very well done indeed. Seldom can a novelist have so completely mastered the vocabulary of spite and recrimination. *Expiation*, too, is another book which relies for its effect on a single character, but that a very real one. Millie Bott, the heroine, is genuine enough to carry the whole *Forsyte Saga* on her shoulders. As it is, she has to carry only the Botts; they are a gallery of suburban types, observed, we think, by the novelist, more than intimately experienced, but so wittily observed that, time and time again, they almost come to life.

A Book of Wines—Other than French, by P. Morton Shand. (Knopf. 10s. 6d.) Mr. Shand has written an extremely entertaining book. The introduction makes the reader realize, for the first time, the awful gap in his æsthetic appreciations. Cradles, corkscrews, short corks, careless waiters, cocktails, tobacco, and coloured glasses have all, apparently, conspired to debar him from a field of delicate enjoyment. Mr. Shand, moreover, writes wittily, and his facts, scientific or historical, are elaborated in the early style of the *Edinburgh Review*. It is astonishing to learn that bottled wine varies with the seasons, and that, when exported to the Antipodes, it still retains its telepathic

connexion with the inversely waxing seasons of Europe. Withering sarcasm is directed against the artificial strengthening of port for the English market, and the growing demand of the vulgar for sparkling varieties. 'The victories of bubbles,' says the author, 'grow apace'. The historical allusions are no less varied; Luther's probable taste in wine is conjectured from the fact that he liked girls with fat legs. Nearly thirteen and a half million gallons of port were imported into England in 1919; Tacitus and Bede bear witness to the wine that was once grown in our island; as late as the eighteenth century, the Duke of Norfolk was bottling the products of the Arundel vineyards. Now, however, we have the Empire, instead; 'there is one use for which Australian wines have been found unrivalled: the christening of British warships'. But there is hope in the Cape.

Apart from its literary merits, this book is of real assistance to the amateur, particularly to him who has the sense to order his wines direct from their native vineyards. At the back are a bibliography, a glossary on technical terms, and a table for the record of purchases made out like a game-book. The reviewer is desired to state that most of the information is taken from a work by the same author published by Guy Chapman in 1926, and now out of print.

The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia; an Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage, and Family Life among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea, by Bronislaw Malinowski. (Routledge. £2 2s.) This work, a fine example of modern book-production, will not only endure as a scientific classic, but as one which expounds perfectly the contrast between the social system

of savages and the complicated and arbitrary Christian morality still prevalent in states no longer Christian. The qualifications of the author to write on such a subject need no testimony, beyond mention of the years of intellectual solitude which he spent in search of his information. He writes concisely and to the point; he has humour; and he can employ, upon the intrusion of white magistrates and missionaries into his field, an adept sarcasm.

The central factor in the Trobiand society is a total ignorance of the father's share in procreation. Hence, all distinctions of family and rank, which are very marked, are inherited from the mother. The child is produced, in native opinion, by a magical system of reincarnation; though the father is devoted to it, tends it, and admits his likeness to it, it finds itself, upon reaching maturity, a member of its mother's clan and obliged to submit to the orders of its mother's male relatives. Thus the importance of women is in all senses equal to that of men; it is, in fact, the man who receives the dowry, instead of the woman; and this peculiar balance between the sexes is illustrated by the legends, and even practice, of women wreaking their desire on the unwilling male.

The Trobianders are a sensitive people, clean in their habits and bodies, and seldom countenancing anything in the nature of exhibitionist licence. Sexual intercourse between boys and girls begins as soon as development allows. But whereas we are taught to consider a child born out of wedlock reprehensible, as indicating pre-nuptial intercourse, the disgrace among the Trobianders derives from the injury to the social system. Furthermore, it is a fact that, despite a complete absence of moral restrictions, bastards are extremely rare. Contraceptives

are unknown. How conception is avoided, Professor Malinowski is at a loss to explain. On the other hand, the marriage bond, once recognized, is strong; monogamy is the general rule; and this is strengthened by the deep mutual affections and the love of romance, which are characteristics of the people. Here, indeed, is that enviable 'state of nature', after which the thinkers of the eighteenth century so constantly sighed. The whites on the spot officially deplore it, though unfeignedly jealous of the natives' psychological method of contraception. The latter, however, return the compliment; they 'are perfectly well aware', says the author, 'that venereal disease and homosexuality are among the benefits bestowed on them by Western culture'.

Pel Verjuice (Charles Reece Pemberton) was one of those men whose considerable talents just fall short of genius, whose character just misses greatness—the narrow margin of whose failure has so enflamed their natural egotism that, with the best will in the world, they themselves, their virtues and disappointments, are continually creeping in to any and every discussion. Thus, his *Autobiography* (*Scholartis Press. 8s. 6d.*) at its worst resembles the wordiest and most rhetorical digressions of Trelawney, Hogg, Herman Melville, all rolled into a single person. Yet ever and again he breaks out in some rapturous paragraph, describing a storm, a sunset, sailing ships at sea, which is impregnated with a singular and illuminating beauty. Pressed into the Navy at a tender age, Pemberton served throughout the Napoleonic wars. This is a book to buy, but not to read in its entirety.

Another autobiography, of the same period, but otherwise vastly different, is Harriette Wilson's *Memoirs of*

Votaries of good living praise

DE RESZKE

The Aristocrat of Cigarettes

American - 25 for 1/10	Tenor (Turkish) 25 for 3/2
American de Luxe 25 for 2/-	Egyptian Blend 20 for 2/-
De Reszke Virginias 20 for 1/-	De Reszke Turks 20 for 1/-

J. MILLHOFF & CO. LTD., 86 PICCADILLY, W.1

Modern First Editions

We are prepared to buy, at the prices indicated, fine copies of the following first editions:

Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, £25; The Dynasts, £14; Tomlinson, Sea and Jungle, £14; Galsworthy, Man of Property, £50; Douglas, South Wind, £10; McFee, Letters of an Ocean Tramp, £6; Shaw, Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant, £50; Butler, Way of all Flesh, £12; Bennett, Old Wives' Tale, £20; Kipling, First and Second Jungle Book, £30; Barrie, Little Minister, £40. We offer very high prices for any books by Galsworthy published under the name Sinjohn, and his Forsythe Saga, large or small paper editions. Please offer us all first editions of Shaw, Galsworthy, Kipling, Hardy, Douglas, De La Mare, Conrad, Barrie, McFee, Wilde, Hudson, Montague, Sassoon, Herman Melville, A. E. Housman, Beerbohm, Lawrence, and James Stephens.

DAVIS & ORIOLI
30 MUSEUM STREET
LONDON, W.C.1

BOOKS

We have made

TWO
NEW CATALOGUES

one of

BOOKS ON ART

and another of

BOOKS ON ANGLING

HUNTING, HORSES

SHOOTING, ETC.,

and would like to send them
to you. May we have a card?

J. and E. Bumpus Ltd.
350 Oxford Street, London, W.1
Telephone: Mayfair 1223

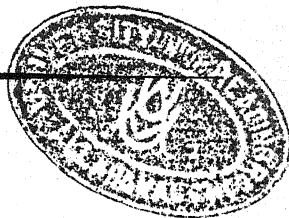
BUMPUS

Herself and Others (Peter Davies. 7s. 6d.). Harriette Wilson was a popular and much-loved courtesan; badly treated, as she thought, by the Duke of Bedford, she settled down in Paris to the compilation of a volume of blackmailing memoirs. Universal consternation; the Duke of Wellington, an old and devoted friend, threatened to have her hung! But, though time has taken the sting out of her malice, it cannot impair her undoubted literary gifts; she had an unusual if slap-dash descriptive skill and a falcon's eye for character. The present reprint, supplemented by Mr. James Laver's introduction, is cheap and comfortable to read and hold. A memorable book; but I think its new editors might have corrected some of Harriette's more obvious mistakes in spelling and punctuation.

In her book *The Scots Kitchen* (Blackie. 7s. 6d.), Miss F. Marian McNeill, by way of introduction to 260 recipes, gives an historical sketch of Scots cookery which distinguishes the book from the ordinary run of cookery books. She traces the advance of cookery as an art in Scotland, and we see that Mary of Lorraine, wife of James V, introduced to Edinburgh the civilization of France, and with it, of course, French cooking. This seems to have been practised with such zest that 'the affairi of the kytcheing were so gryping that the mynesteri stipends could nocht be payit'. Miss McNeill goes on to say that 'this prolonged period of high living resulted at last in an actual shortage of food, and in 1581 a law was passed against 'superfluous banqueting'. This book might serve a twofold purpose in school cookery-classes, and it will also be useful to all who are on the look-out for Scottish recipes.

LIFE AND LETTERS

EDITORIAL



When *Life and Letters* started we said that we would sometimes give up a whole number to a controversy or to one long contribution. It is time this promise was fulfilled. But before venturing on a course unusual in the conduct of magazines, editors must be certain that they have found a work of unusual merit and originality.

It is with complete confidence that we introduce to our subscribers and readers a novel, or rather an abbreviated novel, by Richard Hughes. Both in style and narrative *A High Wind in Jamaica* not only at every turn surprises, but also satisfies, the imagination. And whatever in it surprises most, the reader recognizes the next moment as right. This is the test of true originality.

The only other periodical which has been in the habit of offering to its readers numbers containing the work of one man only, is the famous French periodical, *Cahiers de Quinzaine*. The advantage is that an editor can thus draw on good work too long for other magazines, when not serialized, and that such work, at any rate in a small circle, becomes instantly known. Now there are obvious disadvantages in serializing in a monthly a work of fiction or a long monograph. Good fiction should be as Flaubert said, *avalier d'un coup*, or certainly with only those pauses which are dictated

by the reader's inclination and not by the calendar. We had before us the alternatives (both have drawbacks) either printing Mr. Hughes's work complete in separate numbers, or, by omitting parts and increasing the size of one number of *Life and Letters*, of giving our reader a general view of the novel. There was no dead wood in it which could be lopped off; all the excisions were losses. But the gain of knowing what happened while the beginning and middle of the story is fresh in mind was even greater than that loss. Fortunately, too, *A High Wind in Jamaica* is told in a series of scenes and episodes some of which could be removed without interrupting the narrative; though not without disturbing, in some cases the psychological balance of the character-drawing and interrupting those pauses by which an artist encourages the imagination to dwell upon and spread over a situation.

The complete novel will be published in the autumn by Messrs. Chatto & Windus. No one who reads the abbreviated version can fail to wish to possess the book.

One observation about a story which may strike some as improbable, may be interesting to those on the point of reading it. Up to a surprisingly late date in the nineteenth century, pirates—poor, seedy, late-surviving flies crawling languidly about in the winter of their discontent—did continue to pursue a sadly discredited profession. There is some basis in fact for this surprising story, and this still more surprising and imaginative interpretation of wild children and mild ruffians.

RICHARD HUGHES

A HIGH WIND IN JAMAICA

CHAPTER I

One of the fruits of Emancipation in the West Indian islands is the number of the ruins, either attached to the houses that remain or within a stone's throw of them: ruined slaves' quarters, ruined sugar-grinding houses, ruined boiling houses; often ruined mansions that were too expensive to maintain. Earthquake, fire, rain, and deadlier vegetation, did their work quickly.

One scene is very clear in my mind, in Jamaica. There was a vast stone-built house called Derby Hill. It had been the centre of a very prosperous plantation. With Emancipation, like many others, that went *bung*. The sugar buildings fell down. Bush smothered the cane and guinea-grass. The field negroes left their cottages in a body, to be somewhere less disturbed by even the possibility of work. Then the house negroes' quarters burned down, and the three remaining faithful servants occupied *the mansion*.

The people who lived there at the time I have in mind were the Bas-Thorntons: not natives of the Island, 'Creoles,' but a family from England. Mr. Bas-Thornton had a business of some kind in St. Anne's, and used to ride there every day on a mule. He had such long legs that his stunted mount made him look rather ridiculous: and being quite as temperamental as a mule himself, a quarrel between the two was generally worth watching.

It was a kind of paradise for English children to come to, whatever it might be for their parents: especially at

that time, when no one lived in at all a wild way at home. Here one had to be a little ahead of the times: or decadent, whichever you like to call it. The difference between boys and girls, for instance, had to be left to look after itself. Long hair would have made the evening search for grass-ticks and nits interminable: Emily and Rachel had their hair cut short, and were allowed to do everything the boys did—to climb trees, swim, and trap animals and birds: they even had two pockets in their frocks.

It was round the bathing-pool their life centred, more than the house.

The best fun at the bathing-pool was had with a big forked log. John would sit astride the main stem, and the others pushed him about by the two prongs. The little ones, of course, only splashed about the shallow end: but John and Emily dived. John, that is to say, dived properly, head-foremost: Emily only jumped in feet first, stiff as a rod; but she, on the other hand, would go off higher boughs than he would. Once, when she was eight, Mrs. Thornton had thought she was too big to bathe naked any more. The only bathing-dress she could rig was an old cotton night-gown. Emily jumped in as usual: first the balloons of air tipped her upside down, and then the wet cotton wrapped itself round her head and arms and nearly drowned her. After that, decency was let go hang again: it is hardly worth being drowned for—at least, it does not at first sight appear to be.

But once a negro really was drowned in the pool. He had gorged himself full of stolen mangoes: and feeling guilty, thought he might as well also cool himself in the forbidden pond, and make one repentance cover two

crimes. He could not swim, and had only a child (Little Jim) with him. The cold water and the surfeit brought on an apoplexy: Jim poked at him with a piece of stick a little, and then ran away in a fright. Whether the man died of the apoplexy or the drowning was a point for an inquest; and the doctor, after staying at Ferndale for a week, decided it was from drowning, but that he was full of green mangoes right up to his mouth. The great advantage of this was that no negro would bathe there again, for fear the dead man's 'duppy', or ghost, should catch him. So if any black even came near while they were bathing, John and Emily would pretend the duppy had grabbed at them, and off he would go, terribly upset. Only one of the negroes at Ferndale had ever actually seen a duppy: but that was quite enough. They cannot be mistaken for living people, because their heads are turned backwards on their shoulders, and they carry a chain: moreover one must never call them duppies to their faces, as it gives them power. This poor man forgot, and called out '*Duppy!*' when he saw it. He got terrible rheumatics.

ii

The stream which fed the bathing-hole ran into it down a gully through the bush which offered an enticing vista for exploring: but somehow the children did not often go up it very far. For, only a few yards up, there was a Frangipani tree: a mass of brilliant blossom and no leaves, which was almost hidden in a cloud of humming-birds so vivid as much to outshine the flowers. Writers have often lost their way trying to explain how brilliant a jewel the humming-bird is: it cannot be done.

They build their wee woollen nests on the tops of twigs,

where no snake can reach them. They are devoted to their eggs, and will not move though you touch them. But they are so delicate the children never did that: they held their breath and stared and stared—and were out-stared.

Somehow the celestial vividness of this barrier generally arrested them: it was seldom they explored farther: only once, I think, on a day when Emily was feeling peculiarly irritated.

It was her own tenth birthday. They had frittered away all the morning in the glass-like gloom of the bathing-hole. Now John sat naked on the bank making a wicker trap. In the shallows the small ones rolled and chuckled. Emily, for coolness, sat up to her chin in water, and hundreds of infant fish were tickling with their inquisitive mouths every inch of her body, a sort of expressionless light kissing.

Anyhow she had lately come to hate being touched—but this was abominable. At last, when she could stand it no longer, she clambered out and dressed. Rachel and Laura were too small for a long walk: and the last thing, she felt, that she wanted was to have one of the boys with her: so she stole quietly past John's back, scowling balefully at him for no particular reason. Soon she was out of sight among the bushes.

She pushed on rather fast, not taking much notice of things, up the river bed for about three miles. She had never been so far afield before. Then her attention was caught by a clearing leading down to the water: and here was the source of the river. She caught her breath delightedly: it bubbled up clear and cold, through three distinct springs, under a clump of bamboos, just as a river should: the greatest possible find, and a private

discovery of her own. She gave instantaneous inward thanks to God for thinking of such a perfect birthday treat, especially as things had seemed to be going all wrong: and then began to ferret in the limestone sources with the whole length of her arm, among the ferns and cresses.

Hearing a splash, she looked round. Some half-dozen strange negro children had come down the clearing to fetch water and were staring at her in astonishment. Emily stared back. In sudden terror they flung down their calabashes and galloped away up the clearing like hares. Immediately, but with dignity, Emily followed them. The clearing narrowed to a path, and the path led in a very short time to a village.

It was all ragged and unkempt, and shrill with voices. There were small one-storey wattle huts dotted about, completely overhung by the most enormous trees. There was no sort of order: they appeared anywhere: there were no railings, and only one or two of the most terribly starved, mangy cattle to keep in or out. In the middle of all was an indeterminate quagmire or muddy pond, where a group of half-naked negroes, and totally naked black children, and a few brown ones, were splashing with geese and ducks.

Emily stared: they stared back. She made a movement towards them: they separated at once into the various huts, and watched her from there. Encouraged by the comfortable feeling of inspiring fright she advanced, and at last found an old creature who would talk: 'Dis Liberty Hill, dis Black Man's Town, Old-time niggers, dey go fer run from de bushas (overseers) go fer live here. De piccaninnies, dey never see buckras (whites)

... ' And so on. It was a refuge, built by runaway slaves, and still inhabited.

And then, that her cup of happiness might be full, some of the bolder children crept out and respectfully offered her flowers—really to get a better look at her pallid face. Her heart bubbled up in her, she swelled with glory: and taking leave with the greatest condescension she trod all the long way home on veritable air, back to her beloved family, back to a birthday cake wreathed with stephanotis, lit with ten candles, and in which it so happened that the sixpenny piece was invariably found in the birthday-person's slice.

iii

This was, fairly typically, the life of an English family in Jamaica. Mostly these only stayed a few years. The Creoles—families who had been in the West Indies for more than one generation—gradually evolved something a little more distinctive. They lost some of the traditional mental mechanism of Europe, and the outlines of a new one began to appear.

There was one such family the Bas-Thorntons were acquainted with, who had a ramshackle estate to the eastward. They invited John and Emily to spend a couple of days with them, but Mrs. Thornton was in two minds about letting them go, lest they should learn bad ways. The children there were a wildish lot, and, in the morning at least, would often run about barefoot like negroes, which is a very important point in a place like Jamaica where the whites have to keep up appearances. They had a governess whose blood was possibly not pure, and who used to beat the children ferociously

with a hair-brush. However, the climate at the Fernandez's place was healthy, and also Mrs. Thornton thought it good for them to have some intercourse with other children outside their own family, however undesirable: and she let them go.

It was the afternoon after that birthday, and a long buggy-ride. Both fat John and thin Emily were speechless and solemn with excitement: it was the first visit they had ever paid. Hour after hour the buggy laboured over the uneven road. At last the lane to Exeter, the Fernandez's place, was reached. It was evening, the sun about to do his rapid tropical setting. He was unusually large and red, as if he threatened something peculiar. The lane, or drive, was gorgeous: for the first few hundred yards it was entirely hedged with 'seaside grapes', clusters of fruit half-way between a gooseberry and a golden pippin, with here and there the red berries of coffee trees newly planted among the burnt stumps in a clearing, but already neglected. Then a massive stone gateway in a sort of Colonial-Gothic style. This had to be circumvented: no one had taken the trouble to heave open the heavy gates for years. There was no fence, nor ever had been, so the track simply passed it by.

Almost unexpectedly they came on the house, and were whisked straight off to bed. Emily omitted to wash, since there seemed such a hurry, but made up for it by spending an unusually long time over her prayers. She pressed her eyeballs devoutly with her fingers to make sparks appear, in spite of the slightly sick feeling it always induced: and then, already sound asleep, clambered, I suppose, into bed.

The next day the sun rose as he had set: large, round, and red. It was blindingly hot, foreboding. Emily, who

woke early in a strange bed, stood at the window watching the negroes release the hens from the chicken-houses, where they were shut up at night for fear of John-crows.

Margaret Fernandez, whose room Emily was sharing, slipped out of bed silently and stood beside her, wrinkling the short nose in her pallid face.

‘Good morning,’ said Emily politely.

‘Smells like an earthquake,’ said Margaret, and dressed. Emily remembered the awful story about the governess and the hair-brush; certainly Margaret did not use one for its ordinary purpose, though she had long hair: so it must be true.

Margaret was ready long before Emily, and banged out of the room. Emily followed later, neat and nervous, to find no one. The house was empty. Presently she spied John under a tree, talking to a negro boy. By his off-hand manner Emily guessed he was telling *disproportionate* stories (not *lies*) about the importance of Ferndale compared with Exeter. She did not call him, because the house was silent and it was not her place, as guest, to alter anything: so she went out to him. Together they circumnavigated: they found a stable-yard, and negroes preparing ponies, and the Fernandez children, barefoot even as Rumour had whispered. Emily caught her breath, shocked. Even at that moment a chicken, scuttling across the yard, trod on a scorpion and tumbled over stark dead as if shot. But it was not so much the danger which upset Emily as the unconventionality.

‘Come on,’ said Margaret: ‘it’s much too hot to stay about here. We’ll go down to Exeter Rocks.’

Exeter Rocks is a famous place. A bay of the sea, almost a perfect semicircle, guarded by the reef: shelving white sands to span the few feet from the water to the

under-cut turf: and then, almost at the mid point, a jutting-out shelf of rocks right into deep water—fathoms deep. And a narrow fissure in the rocks, leading the water into a small pool, or miniature lagoon, right inside their bastion. There it was, safe from sharks or drowning, that the Fernandez children meant to soak themselves all day, like turtles in a crawl. The water of the bay was as smooth and immovable as basalt, yet clear as the finest gin: albeit the swell muttered a mile away on the reef. The water within the pool itself could not reasonably be smoother. No sea-breeze thought of stirring. No bird trespassed on the inert air.

For a while they had not energy to get into the water, but lay on their faces, looking down, down, down, at the sea-fans and sea-feathers, the scarlet-plumed barnacles and corals, the black and yellow schoolmistress-fish, the rainbow fish—all that forest of ideal christmas trees which is a tropical sea-bottom. Then they stood up, giddy and seeing black, and in a trice were floating suspended in water like drowned ones, only their noses above the surface, under the shadow of a rocky ledge.

An hour or so after noon they clustered together, puffy from the warm water, in the insufficient shade of a Panama fern: ate such of the food they had brought as they had appetite for; and drank all the water, wishing for more. Then a very odd thing happened: for even as they sat there they heard the most peculiar sound: a strange, rushing sound that passed overhead like a gale of wind—but not a breath of breeze stirred, that was the odd thing: followed by a sharp hissing and hurtling, like a flight of rockets, or gigantic swans—very distant rocs, perhaps—on the wing. They all looked up: but there was nothing at all. The sky was empty and

lucid. Long before they were back in the water again all was still. Except that after a while John noticed a sort of tapping, as if some one were gently knocking the outside of a bath you were in. But the bath they were in had no outside, it was solid world. It was funny.

Not a breath of breeze even yet ruffled the water: yet momentarily it trembled of its own accord, shattering the reflections: then was glassy again. On that the children held their breath, waiting for it to happen.

A school of fish, terrified by some purely submarine event, thrust their heads right out of the water, squatting across the bay in an arrowy rush, dashing up sparkling ripples with the tiny heave of their shoulders: yet after each disturbance all was soon like hardest, dark, thick, glass.

Once things vibrated slightly, like a chair in a concert-room: and again there was that mysterious winging, though there was nothing visible beneath the swollen iridescent stars.

Then it came. The water of the bay began to ebb away, as if some one had pulled up the plug: a foot or so of sand and coral gleamed for a moment new to the air: then back the sea rushed in miniature rollers which splashed right up to the feet of the palms. Mouthfuls of turf were torn away: and on the far side of the bay a small piece of cliff tumbled into the water: sand and twigs showered down, dew fell from the trees like diamonds: birds and beasts, their tongues at last loosed, screamed and bellowed: the ponies, though quite unalarmed, lifted up their heads and yelled.

That was all: a few moments. Then Silence, with a rapid countermarch, recovered all his rebellious kingdom. Stillness again. The trees moved as little as the

pillars of a ruin, each leaf laid sleekly in place. The bubbling foam subsided: the reflections of the stars came out among it as if from clouds. Silent, still, dark, placid, as if there could never have been a disturbance. The naked children too continued to stand motionless beside the quiet ponies, dew on their hair and eyelashes, shine on their infantile round paunches.

But as for Emily, it was too much. The earthquake went completely to her head. She began to dance, hopping laboriously from one foot on to another. John caught the infection. He turned head over heels on the damp sand, over and over in an elliptical course, till before he knew it he was in the water, and so giddy as hardly to be able to tell up from down.

At that, Emily knew what it was she wanted to do. She scrambled on to a pony and galloped him up and down the beach, trying to bark like a dog. The Fernandez children stared, solemn but not disapproving. John, shaping a course for Cuba, was swimming as if sharks were paring his toe-nails. Emily rode her pony into the sea, and beat and beat him till he swam: and so she followed John towards the reef, yapping herself hoarse.

It must have been fully a hundred yards before they were spent. Then they turned for the shore, John holding on to Emily's leg, puffing and gasping, both a little overdone, their emotion run down. Presently John gasped:

'You shouldn't ride on your bare skin, you'll catch ringworm.'

'I don't care if I do,' said Emily.

'You would if you did,' said John.

'I don't care!' chanted Emily.

It seemed a long way to the shore. When they reached it the others had dressed and were preparing to start.

Soon the whole party were on their way home in the dark. Presently Margaret said:

‘So that’s that.’

No one answered.

‘I could smell it was an earthquake coming when I got up. Didn’t I say so, Emily?’

‘You and your smells!’ said Jimmie Fernandez. ‘You’re always smelling things!’

‘She’s awfully good at smells,’ said the youngest, Harry, proudly, to John. ‘She can sort out people’s dirty clothes for the wash by smell: who they belong to.’

‘She can’t really,’ said Jimmie: ‘she fakes it. As if every one smelt different!’

‘I can!’

‘Dogs can, anyway,’ said John.

Emily said nothing. Of course people smelt different: it didn’t need arguing. She could always tell her own towel from John’s, for instance: or even knew if one of the others had used it. But it just showed what sort of people Creoles were, to *talk* about Smell, in that open way.

‘Well, anyhow I said there was going to be an earthquake and there was one,’ said Margaret.

That was what Emily was waiting for! So it really had been an Earthquake (she had not liked to ask, it seemed so ignorant: but now Margaret had said in so many words that it was one).

If ever she went back to England, she could now say to people, ‘*I have been in an Earthquake*’.

With that certainty, her soused excitement began to revive. For there was nothing, no adventure from the hands of God or Man, to equal it. Realize that if she had suddenly found she could fly it would not have

seemed more miraculous to her. Heaven had played its last, most terrible card; and small Emily had survived, where even grown men (such as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram) had succumbed.

Life seemed suddenly a little empty: for never again could there happen to her anything so dangerous, so sublime.

Meanwhile, Margaret and Jimmie were still arguing:

‘Well, there’s one thing, there’ll be plenty of eggs to-morrow,’ said Jimmie. ‘There’s nothing like an earthquake for making them lay.’

How funny Creoles were! They didn’t seem to realize the difference it made to a person’s whole after-life to have been in an Earthquake.

When they got home, Martha, the black housemaid, had hard things to say about the sublime cataclysm. She had dusted the drawing-room china only the day before: and now everything was covered again in a fine penetrating film of dust.

iv

The next morning, Sunday, they went home.

Whatever it might have done for Emily’s soul, the earthquake had done little to clear the air. It was as hot as ever. In the animal world there seemed some strange commotion, as if they had wind of something. The usual lizards and mosquitoes were still absent: but in their place the earth’s most horrid progeny, creatures of darkness, sought the open: land-crabs wandered about aimlessly, angrily twiddling their claws: and the ground seemed almost alive with red ants and cockroaches. Up on the roof the pigeons were gathered, talking to each other fearfully.

The cellar (or rather, ground floor), where they were playing, had no communication with the wooden structure above, but had an opening of its own under the twin flight of steps leading to the front door; and there the children presently gathered in the shadow. Out in the compound lay one of Mr. Thornton's best handkerchiefs. He must have dropped it that morning. But none of them felt the energy to go and retrieve it, out into the sun. Then, as they stood there, they saw Lamfoot Sam come limping across the yard. Seeing the prize, he was about to carry it off. Suddenly he remembered it was Sunday. He dropped it like a hot brick, and began to cover it with sand, exactly where he had found it.

'Please God, I thieve you to-morrow,' he explained hopefully. 'Please God, you still there?'

A low mutter of thunder seemed to offer grudging assent.

'Thank you, Lord,' said Sam, bowing to a low bank of cloud. He hobbled off: but then, not too sure perhaps that Heaven would keep Its promise, changed his mind: snatched up the handkerchief and made off for his cottage. The thunder muttered louder and more angrily: but Sam ignored the warning.

It was the custom that, whenever Mr. Thornton had been to St. Anne's, John and Emily should run out to meet him, and ride back with him, one perched on each of his stirrups.

That Sunday evening they ran out as soon as they saw him coming, in spite of the thunderstorm that by now was clattering over their very heads—and not only over their heads either, for in the Tropics a thunderstorm is not a remote affair up in the sky, as it is in England, but is all round you: lightning plays ducks and drakes across the water, bounds from tree to tree,

bounces about the ground, while the thunder seems to proceed from violent explosions in your own very core.

'Go back! Go back, you damned little fools!' he yelled furiously: 'Get into the house!'

They stopped, aghast: and began to realize that after all it was a storm of more than ordinary violence. They discovered that they were drenched to the skin—must have been the moment they left the house. The lightning kept up a continuous blaze: it was playing about their father's very stirrup-irons; and all of a sudden they realized that he was afraid. They fled to the house, shocked to the heart: and he was in the house almost as soon as they were. Mrs. Thornton rushed out:

'My dear, I'm so glad . . .'

'I've never seen such a storm! Why on earth did you let the children come out?'

'I never dreamt they would be so silly! And all the time I was thinking—but thank Heaven you're back!'

'I think the worst is over now.'

Perhaps it was; but all through supper the lightning shone almost without flickering. And John and Emily could hardly eat: the memory of that momentary look on their father's face haunted them.

It was an unpleasant meal altogether. Mrs. Thornton had prepared for her husband his 'favourite dish': than which no action could more annoy a man of whim. In the middle of it all in burst Sam, ceremony dropped: he flung the handkerchief angrily on the table and stumped out.

'What on earth . . .' began Mr. Thornton.

But John and Emily knew: and thoroughly agreed with Sam as to the cause of the storm. Stealing was bad enough anyway, but on a Sunday!

Meanwhile, the lightning kept up its play. The thunder made talking arduous, but no one was anyhow in a mood to chatter. Only thunder was heard, and the hammering of the rain. But suddenly, close under the window, there burst out the most appalling inhuman shriek of terror.

'Tabby!' cried John, and they all rushed to the window.

But Tabby had already flashed into the house: and behind him was a whole club of wild cats in hot pursuit. John momentarily opened the dining-room door and puss slipped in, dishevelled and panting. Not even then did the brutes desist: what insane fury led these jungle creatures to pursue him into the very house is unimaginable; but there they were, in the passage, caterwauling in concert: and as if at their incantation the thunder awoke anew, and the lightning nullified the meagre table lamp. It was such a din as you could not speak through. Tabby, his fur on end, pranced up and down the room, his eyes blazing, talking and sometimes exclaiming in a tone of voice the children had never heard him use before and which made their blood run cold. He seemed like one inspired in the presence of Death, he had gone utterly Delphic: and without in the passage Hell's pandemonium reigned terrifically.

The check could only be a short one. Outside the door stood the big filter, and above the door the fanlight was long since broken. Something black and yelling flashed through the fanlight, landing clean in the middle of the supper table, scattering the forks and spoons and upsetting the lamp. And another and another—but already Tabby was through the window and streaking again for the bush. The whole dozen of those wild cats leapt one after the other from the top of the

filter clean through the fanlight onto the supper table, and away from there only too hot in his tracks: in a moment the whole devil-hunt and its hopeless quarry had vanished into the night.

'Oh Tabby, my darling Tabby!' wailed John; while Emily rushed again to the window.

They were gone. The lightning behind the creepers in the jungle lit them up like giant cobwebs: but of Tabby and his pursuers there was nothing to be seen.

John burst into tears, the first time for several years, and flung himself on his mother: Emily stood transfixed at the window, her eyes glued in horror on what she could not, in fact, see: and all of a sudden was sick.

'God, what an evening!' groaned Mr. Bas-Thornton, groping in the darkness for what might be left of their supper.

Shortly after that Sam's hut burst into flames. They saw, from the dining-room, the old negro stagger dramatically out into the darkness. He was throwing stones at the sky. In a lull they heard him cry: 'I gib it back, didn't I? I gib de nasty t'ing back?'

Then there was another blinding flash, and Sam fell where he stood. Mr. Thornton pulled the children roughly back and said something like 'I'll go and see. Keep them from the window.'

Then he closed and barred the shutters, and was gone.

John and the little ones kept up a continuous sobbing. Emily wished some one would light a lamp, she wanted to read. Anything, so as not to think about poor Tabby.

I suppose the wind must have begun to rise some while before this, but now, by the time Mr. Thornton had managed to carry old Sam's body into the house, it was more than a gale. The old man, stiff in the joints

as he might have been in life, had gone as limp as a worm. Emily and John, who had slipped unbeknownst into the passage, were thrilled beyond measure at the way he dangled: they could hardly tear themselves away, and be back in the dining-room, before they should be discovered.

There Mrs. Thornton sat heroically in a chair, her brood all grouped round her, saying the Psalms, and the poems of Sir Walter Scott, over by heart: while Emily tried to keep her mind off Tabby by going over in her head all the details of her Earthquake. At times the din, the rocketing of the thunder and torrential shriek of the wind, became so loud as almost to impinge on her inner world: she wished this wretched thunderstorm would hurry up and get over. First she held an actual performance of the earthquake, went over it direct, as if it was again happening. Then she put it into *Oratio Recta*, told it as a story, beginning with that magic phrase, 'Once I was in an Earthquake.' But before long the dramatic element reappeared—this time, the awed comments of her imaginary English audience. When that was done, she put it into the *Historical—a Voice*, declaring that a girl called Emily was once in an Earthquake. And so on, right through the whole thing a third time.

The horrid fate of poor Tabby appeared suddenly before her eyes, caught her unawares: and she was all but sick again. Even her earthquake had failed her. Caught by the incubus, her mind struggled frantically to clutch at even the outside world, as an only remaining straw. She tried to fix her interest on every least detail of the scene around her—to count the slats in the shutters, any least detail that was *outward*. So it was

that for the first time she really began to notice the weather.

The wind by now was more than redoubled. The shutters were bulging as if tired elephants were leaning against them, and Father was trying to tie the fastening with that handkerchief. But to push against this wind, was like pushing against rock. The handkerchief, shutters, everything burst: the rain poured in like the sea into a sinking ship, the wind occupied the room, snatching pictures from the wall, sweeping the table bare. Through the gaping frames the lightning-lit scene without was visible. The creepers, which before had looked like cobwebs, now streamed up into the sky like new-combed hair. Bushes were lying flat, laid back on the ground as close as a rabbit lays back his ears. Branches were leaping about loose in the sky. The negro huts were clean gone, and the negroes crawling on their stomachs across the compound to gain the shelter of the house. The bouncing rain seemed to cover the ground with a white smoke, a sort of sea in which the blacks wallowed like porpoises. One nigger-boy began to roll away: his mother, forgetting caution, rose to her feet: and immediately the fat old beldam was blown clean away, bowling along across fields and hedgerows like some one in a funny fairy-story, till she fetched up against a wall and was pinned there, unable to move. But the others managed to reach the house, and soon could be heard in the cellar underneath.

Moreover, the very floor began to ripple, as a loose carpet will ripple on a gusty day: in opening the cellar door the blacks had let the wind in, and now for some time they could not shut it again. The wind, to push against, was more like a solid block than a current of air.

Mr. Thornton went round the house—to see what could be done, he said. He soon realized that the next thing to go would be the roof. So he returned to the Niobe-group in the dining-room. Mrs. Thornton was half-way through *The Lady of the Lake*, the smaller children listening with rapt attention. Exasperated, he told them that they would probably not be alive in half an hour. No one seemed particularly interested in his news: Mrs. Thornton continued her recitation with faultless memory.

After another couple of cantos the threatened roof went. Fortunately, the wind taking it from inside, most of it was blown clear of the house: but one of the couples collapsed skew-eyed, and was hung up on what was left of the dining-room door—within an ace of hitting John. Emily, to her intense resentment, suddenly felt cold. All at once, she found she had had enough of the storm: it had become intolerable, instead of a welcome distraction.

Mr. Thornton began to look for something to break through the floor. If only he could make a hole in it, he might get his wife and children down into the cellar. Fortunately he did not have to look far: one arm of the fallen couple had already done the work for him. Laura, Rachel, Emily, Edward and John, Mrs. Thornton, and finally Mr. Thornton himself, were passed down into the darkness already thronged with negroes and goats.

With great good sense, Mr. Thornton brought with him from the room above a couple of decanters of madeira, and every one had a swig, from Laura to the oldest negro. All the children made the most of this unholy chance, but somehow to Emily the bottle got passed twice, and each time she took a good pull. It was

enough, at their age; and while what was left of the house was blown away over their heads, through the lull and the ensuing aerial return match, John, Emily, Edward, Rachel, and Laura, blind drunk, slept in a heap on the cellar floor: a sleep over which the appalling fate of Tabby, torn to pieces by those fiends almost under their very eyes, dominated with the easy empire of nightmare.

CHAPTER II

All night the water poured through the house floor onto the people sheltering below: but (perhaps owing to the madeira) it did them no harm. Shortly after the second bout of blowing, however, the rain stopped; and when dawn came Mr. Thornton crept out to assess the damage.

The wooden part of the house was nearly all gone. After they had succeeded in reaching shelter, one wall after another had blown down. The furniture was splintered into matchwood. Even the heavy mahogany dining-table, which they loved, and had always kept with its legs in little glass baths of oil to defeat the ants, was spirited right away. There were some fragments which might be part of it, or they might not: you could not tell.

Mr. Thornton returned to the cellar and helped his wife out: she was so cramped as hardly to be able to move. They knelt down together and thanked God for not having treated them any worse.

The stable was damaged, though not completely destroyed: and Mr. Thornton's mule was so much hurt he had to tell a negro to cut its throat. The buggy was smashed beyond repair. The only building undamaged was a stone chamber which had been the hospital of the old sugar-estate: so they woke the children, who were feeling ill and beyond words unhappy, and moved into this: where the negroes, with an unexpected energy and kindness, did everything they could to make them comfortable. It was paved and unlighted: but solid.

The children were bilious for a few days, and inclined to dislike each other: but they accepted the change in their lives practically without noticing it. It is a fact that

it takes experience before one can realize what is a catastrophe and what is not. Children have little faculty of distinguishing between disaster and the ordinary course of their lives. If Emily had known this was a *Hurricane*, she would doubtless have been far more impressed, for the word was full of romantic terrors. But it never entered her head: and a thunderstorm, however severe, is after all a commonplace affair. The mere fact that it had done incalculable damage, while the earthquake had done none at all, gave it no right whatever to rival the latter in the hierarchy of cataclysms: an Earthquake is a thing apart. If she was silent, and inclined to brood over some inward terror, it was not the hurricane she was thinking of, it was the death of Tabby. That, at times, seemed a horror beyond all bearing. It was her first intimate contact with death—and a death of violence, too. The death of Old Sam had no such effect: there is, after all, a vast difference between a negro and a favourite cat.

There was something enjoyable, too, in camping in the hospital: a sort of everlasting picnic in which their parents for once were taking part. Indeed it led them to begin for the first time to regard their parents as rational human beings, with understandable tastes—such as sitting on the floor to eat one's dinner.

It would have surprised Mrs. Thornton very much to have been told that hitherto she had meant practically nothing to her children. She took a keen interest in Psychology (the Art Bablative, Southey calls it). She was full of theories about their upbringing which she had not time to put into effect; but nevertheless she thought she had a deep understanding of their temperaments and was the centre of their passionate devotion. Actually, she

was congenitally incapable of telling one end of a child from the other. She was a dumpy little woman—Cornish, I believe. When she was herself a baby she was so small they carried her about on a cushion for fear a clumsy human arm might damage her. She could read when she was two and a half. Her reading was always serious. Nor had she been backward in the humaner studies: her mistresses spoke of her Department as something rarely seen outside the older Royal Houses: in spite of a figure like a bolster, she could step into a coach like an angel getting on to a cloud. She was very quick-tempered.

Mr. Bas-Thornton also had every accomplishment, except two: that of primogeniture, and that of making a living. Either would have provided for them.

If it would have surprised the mother, it would undoubtedly have surprised the children also to be told how little their parents meant to them. Children seldom have any power of quantitative self-analysis: whatever the facts, they believe as an article of faith that they love Father and Mother first and equally. Actually, the Thornton children had loved Tabby first and foremost in all the world, some of each other second, and hardly noticed their mother's existence more than once a week. Their father they loved a little more: partly owing to the ceremony of riding home on his stirrups.

Jamaica remained, and blossomed anew, its womb being inexhaustible. Mr. and Mrs. Thornton remained, and with patience and tears tried to reconstruct things, in so far as they could be reconstructed. But the danger which their beloved little ones had been through was not a thing to risk again. Heaven had warned them. The children must go.

Nor was the only danger physical.

'That awful night!' said Mrs. Thornton, once, when discussing their plan of sending them home to school: 'Oh my dear, what the poor little things must have suffered! Think how much more acute Fear is to a child! And they were so brave, so English.'

'I don't believe they realized it.' (He only said that to be contradictory: he could hardly expect it to be taken seriously.)

'You know, I am terribly afraid what permanent, *inward* effect a shock like that may have on them. Have you noticed they never so much as mention it? In England they would at least be safe from dangers of that sort.'

Meanwhile the children, accepting the new life as a matter of course, were thoroughly enjoying it. Most children, on a railway journey, prefer to change at as many stations as possible.

The rebuilding of Ferndale, too, was a matter of absorbing interest. For there is one advantage to these match-box houses—easy gone, easy come: and once begun, the work proceeded apace. Mr. Thornton himself led the building gang, employing no end of mechanical devices of his own devising, and it was not long before the day came when he stood with his handsome head emerging through the fast dwindling hole in the new roof, shouting directions to the two black carpenters, who, lying spread-eagle in their check shirts, pinned on shingle after shingle—walling him in, like the victim in some horrid story. At last he had to draw in his head, and where it had been the last few shingles were clapped into place.

An hour later the children had looked their last on Ferndale.

When they had been told they were to go to England, they had received it as an isolated fact: thrilling in itself, but without any particular causation—for it could hardly be due to the death of the cat, and nothing else of importance had occurred lately.

The first stage of their journey was by land, to Montego Bay, and the notable thing about it was that the borrowed wagonette was drawn not by a pair of horses or a pair of mules, but by one horse and one mule. Whenever the horse wanted to go fast the mule fell asleep in the shafts: and if the driver woke it up it set off at a gallop, which angered the horse. Their progress would have been slow anyhow, as all the roads were washed away.

The desolation through which they drove is indescribable. Tropical scenery is anyhow tedious, prolific, and gross: the green more or less uniform: great tubular stems supporting thick leaves: no tree has an outline because it is crushed up against something else—no *room*. In Jamaica this profusion swarms over the very mountain ranges: and even the peaks are so numerous that on the top of one you are surrounded by others, and can see nothing. There are hundreds of flowers. Then imagine all this luxuriance smashed, as with a pestle and mortar—crushed, pulped, and already growing again! Mr. Thornton and his wife were ready to shout with relief when they caught their first glimpse of the sea, and at last came out in view of the whole beautiful sweep of Montego Bay itself.

In the open sea there was a considerable swell: but within the shelter of the coral reef, with its pinhole entrance, all was still as a mirror, where three ships of

different sizes lay at anchor, the whole of each beautiful machine repeated in the water under it.

The *Clorinda* had let go her anchor in six fathoms: the water was so clear, and the light so bright, that as they drew near the reflection suddenly dissappeared, and instead they found themselves looking right underneath her and out the other side. The refraction made her seem as flat-bellied as a turtle, as if practically all of her were above the surface: and the anchor on its cable seemed to stream out flatly, like a downwards kite, twisting and twining (owing to the undulating surface) in the writhing coral.

In a moment the children were scattered all over the ship, smelling here, miaowing, sniffing there, like cats in a new home. Mr. and Mrs. Thornton stood by the main companion-way, a little disconsolate at their children's happy preoccupation, a little regretting the lack of proper emotional scene.

'I think they will be happy here, Frederic,' said Mrs. Thornton. 'I wish we could have afforded to send them by the steam-boat: but children find amusement even in discomfort.'

Mr. Thornton grunted.

'I wish schools had never been invented!' he suddenly burst out: 'they wouldn't then be so indispensable!'

There was a short pause for the logic of this to cross the footlights: then he went on:

'I know what will happen; they'll come away . . . mugs! Just ordinary little mugs, like any one else's brats! I'm dashed if I don't think a hundred hurricanes would be better than that.'

Mrs. Thornton shuddered: but she continued bravely:

'You know, I think they were getting almost *too*

devoted to us? We have been such an unrivalled centre of their lives and thoughts. It doesn't do for minds developing to be completely dependent on one person.'

Captain Marpole's grizzled head emerged from the scuttle. A sea-dog: clear blue eyes of a translucent trustworthiness: a merry, wrinkled, morocco-coloured face: a rumbling voice.

'He's too good to be true,' whispered Mrs. Thornton.

'Not at all! It's a sophism to imagine people don't conform to type!' barked Mr. Thornton. He felt at sixes and sevens.

Captain Marpole certainly looked the ideal Children's Captain. He would, Mrs. Thornton decided, be careful without being fussy—for she was all in favour of courageous gymnastics, though glad she would not have to witness them herself. Captain Marpole cast his eyes benignantly over the swarming imps.

'They'll worship him,' she whispered to her husband. (She meant, of course, that he would worship them.) It was an important point, this, of the captain: important as the personality of a head master.

'So that's the nursery, eh?' said the captain, crushing Mrs. Thornton's hand. She strove to answer, but found her throat undoubtedly paralysed. Even Mr. Thornton's ready tongue was at a loss. He looked hard at the captain, jerked his thumb towards the children, wrestled in his mind with an elaborate speech, and finally enunciated in a small, unlikely voice:

'Smack 'em.'

Then the captain had to go about his duties: and for an hour the father and mother sat disconsolately on the main hatch, quite deserted. Even when all was ready

for departure it was impossible to muster the flock for a collective good-bye.

Already the tug was fulminating in its gorge: and ashore they must go. Emily and John had been captured, and stood talking uneasily to their parents, as if to strangers, using only a quarter of their minds. With a rope to be climbed dangling before his very nose, John simply did not know how this delay was to be supported, and lapsed into complete silence.

'Time to go ashore, Ma'am,' said the captain: 'we must be off now.'

Very formally the two generations kissed each other, and said farewell. Indeed, the elders were already at the gangway before the meaning of it all dawned in Emily's head. She rushed after her mother, gripped her ample flesh in two strong fists, and sobbed and wept, 'Come too, Mother, oh, do come too!'

Honestly, it had only occurred to her that very moment that this was a *parting*.

'But think what an adventure it will be,' said Mrs. Thornton bravely: 'much more than if I come too!—You'll have to look after the Liddlies just as if you were a real grown-up!'

'But I don't want any more adventures!' sobbed Emily: 'I've got an *Earthquake*!'

Passions were running far too high for any one to be aware how the final separation took place. The next thing Mrs. Thornton could remember was how tired her arm had been, after waving and waving at that dwindling speck which bore away on the land breeze, hung awhile stationary in the intervening calm, then won the Trade and climbed up into the blue.

Meanwhile, at the rail stood Margaret Fernandez,

who, with her little brother Harry, was going to England by the same boat. No one had come to see them off: and the brown nurse who was accompanying them had gone below the moment she came on board, so as to be ill as quickly as possible. How handsome Mr. Bas-Thornton had looked, with his English distinction! Yet every one knew he had no money. Her set white face was turned towards the land, her chin quivering at intervals. Slowly the harbour disappeared: the disordered profligacy of the turbulent, intricate mass of hills sunk lower in the sky. The occasional white houses, and white puffs of steam and smoke from the sugar-mills, vanished. At last the land, all palely shimmering like the bloom on grapes, settled down into the mirror of emerald and blue.

She wondered whether the Thornton children would prove companionable, or a nuisance. They were all younger than she was: which was a pity.

ii

On the journey back to Ferndale both father and mother were silent, actuated by that tug of jealousy against sympathy which a strong common emotion begets in familiar rather than passionate companions. They were above the ordinary sentimentalities of grass-bereavement (above choking over small shoes found in cupboards): but not above a rather strong dose of the natural instincts of parenthood, Frederic no less than his wife.

But when they were nearly home, Mrs. Thornton began to chuckle to herself.

‘Funny little thing, Emily! Did you notice almost the last thing she said? She said “I’ve got an earthquake”.

She must have got it mixed up in her silly old head with earache.'

There was a long pause: and then she remarked again:

'John is so much the most sensitive: he was absolutely too full to speak.'

iii

When they got home it was many days before they could bring themselves openly to mention the children. When some reference had to be made, they spoke round them, in an uncomfortable way, as if they had died.

But after a few weeks they had a most welcome surprise. The *Clorinda* was calling at the Caymans, and taking the Leeward Passage: and while riding off the Grand Cayman Emily and John wrote letters, and a vessel bound for Kingston had taken charge of them and eventually they reached Ferndale. It had not even occurred to either parent that this would be possible.

This was Emily's:

'My dear Parents,

'This ship is full of Turtles. We stopped here and they came out in boats. There is turtles in the saloon under the tables for you to put your feet on, and turtles in the passages and on the deck, and everywhere you go. The captain says we mustn't fall overboard now because his boats are full of turtles too, with water. The sailors bring the others on deck every day to have a wash and when you stand them up they look just as if they had pinafores on. They make such a funny sighing and groaning in the night, at

first I thought it was everybody being ill, but you get used to it, it is just like people being ill.

‘Your loving daughter,
‘EMILY.’

And John’s:

‘My dearest Parents,

‘The captain’s son Henry is a wonderful chap, he goes up the rigging with his hands alone, he is ever so strong. He can turn round under a bellying pin without touching the deck, I can’t but I hang from the ratlines by my heels which the sailors say is very brave, but they don’t like Emily doing it, funny. I hope you are both in excellent health, one of the sailors has a monkey but its tail is Sore.

‘Your affectionate Son,
‘JOHN.’

That was the last news they could expect for many months.

Yet, a bare fortnight after the arrival of this first budget, still another letter arrived, from Havana. The *Clorinda* had put in there unexpectedly, it appeared: the letter was from Captain Marpole.

‘What a dear man he is,’ said Alice. ‘He must have known how anxious we would be for every scrap of news.’

Captain Marpole’s letter was not so terse and vivid as the children’s had been: still, for the news it contained, I give it in full:

‘Havana de Cuba.

‘Honoured Sir and Madam,

‘I hasten to write to you to relieve you of any uncertainty!

'After leaving the Caymans we stood for the Leeward Passage, and sighted the Isle of Pines and False Cape on the morning of the 19th and Cape S. Antonio in the evening, but were prevented from rounding the same by a true Northerner, the first of the season, on the 22nd, however, the wind coming round sufficiently we rounded the cape in a lively fashion and stood N. $\frac{1}{2}$ E. well away from the Coloradoes which are a dangerous reef lying off this part of the Cuban coast. At six o'clock on the morning of the 23rd there being light airs only I sighted three sail in the North-East, evidently merchantmen bound on the same course as ourselves, at the same time a schooner of similar character was observed standing out towards us from the direction of Black Key, and I pointed her out to my mate just before going below, having the wind of us he was within hailing distance by ten in the morning, judge then of our astonishment when he rudely opened ten or twelve disguised gun-ports and unmasked a whole broadside of artillery trained upon us, ordering us at the same time in the most peremptory manner to heave-to or he would sink us instantaneously. There was nothing to do but comply although considering the friendly relations at present existing between the English and all other governments my mate was quite at a loss to account for his action, and imagined it due to a mistake which would be speedily explained, we were immediately boarded by about fifty or seventy ruffians of the worst Spanish type, armed with knives and cutlasses, who took possession of the ship and confined me in my cabin and my mate and crew forward while they ransacked the vessel committing every possible excess broaching rum-casks

and breaking the necks off wine-bottles and soon a great number of them were lying about the deck in an intoxicated condition, their leader then informed me he was aware I had a considerable sum in specie on board and used *every possible threat which villainy could devise* to make me disclose its hiding-place, it was useless for me to assure him that beyond the fifty or so pounds they had already discovered I carried none, he grew even more insistent in his demands, declaring that his information was certain, tearing down the panelling in my cabin in his search. He carried off my instruments, my clothes, and all my personal possessions, even taking from me the poor Locket in which I was used to carry the portrait of my Wife, and no appeal to his sensibility, tho' I shed tears, would make him return this to him worthless object, he also tore down and carried away the cabin bell-pulls, which could be of no possible use to him and was an act of the most open *piracy*, at length, seeing I was obdurate, he threatened to blow up the ship *and all in it* if I would not yield, he prepared the train and would have proceeded to carry out this devilish threat if I had not in this last extremity, consented.

'I come now to the latter part of my tale. The children had taken refuge in the deck-house and had been up to now free from harm, except for a cuff or two and the Degrading Sights they must have witnessed, but no sooner was the specie some five thousand pounds in all mostly my private property and most of our cargo (chiefly rum sugar coffee and arrowroot) removed to the schooner than her captain, in sheer infamous wantonness, had them all brought out from their refuge your own little ones and the two

Fernandez children who were also on board and murdered them, every one. That anything so wicked should look like a man I should not have believed, had I been told, tho' I have lived long and seen all kinds of men, I think he is mad: indeed I am sure of it; and I take Oath that he shall be brought to at least that tithe of justice which is in Human hands, for two days we drifted about in a helpless condition, for our rigging had all been cut, and at last fell in with an American man-of-war, who gave us some assistance, and would have proceeded in pursuit of the miscreants himself had he not most explicit orders to elsewhere. I then put in to the port of Havana, where I informed the correspondent of Lloyds, the government, and the representative of the *Times* newspaper, and take the opportunity of writing you this melancholy letter before proceeding to England.

'There is one point on which you will still feel some anxiety, considering the sex of some of the poor innocents, and on which I am glad to be able to set your minds at rest, the children were taken onto the other vessel in the evening and I am glad to say there done to death *immediately*, and their little bodies cast into the sea, as I saw with great relief with my own eyes. There was no time for what you might fear to have occurred, and this consolation I am glad to be able to give you.

'I have the honour to be,

'Your obedient servant,

'JAS. MARPOLE,

'Master, barque *Clorinda*.'

CHAPTER III

For the children, those first few days at sea had flashed by like a kind of prolonged circus. There is no machine invented for sober purposes so well adapted also to play as the rigging of a ship: and the kindly captain, as Mrs. Thornton had divined, was willing to give them a lot of freedom. First came the climbing of a few rungs of the ratlines in a sailor's charge: higher each time, till John attained a gingerly touching of the yard: then hugged it: then straddled it. Soon, running up the ratlines and prancing on the yard (as if it were a mere table-top) had no further thrill for John or Emily either. (To go out on the yard was not allowed.)

But when the ratlines had palled, the most lasting joy undoubtedly lay in that network of foot-ropes and chains and stays which spreads out under and on each side of the bowsprit. Here, familiarity only bred content. Here, in fine weather, one could climb or be still: stand, sit, hang, swing, or lie: now this end up, now that: and all with the cream of the blue sea being whipt up for one's own especial pleasure, almost within touching distance: and the big white wooden lady (Clorinda herself), bearing the whole vessel so lightly on her back, her knees in the hubble-bubble, her cracks almost filled up with so much painting, vaster than any living lady, as a constant and unannoying companion.

In the midst there was a kind of spear, its haft set against the under-side of the bowsprit, its point perpendicularly down towards the water—the dolphin-striker. Here it was that the old monkey (who had the Sore tail) loved to hang, by the mere stub which was all a devouring cancer had left him, chattering to the water.

He took no notice of the children, nor they of him: but both parties grew attached to each other, for all that.

—How small the children all looked, on a ship, when you saw them beside the sailors! It was as if they were a different order of beings! Yet they were living creatures just the same, full of promise.

John, with his downy, freckled face, and general round energeticalness.

Emily, with her huge palm-leaf hat, and colourless cotton frock tight over her minute impish erect body: her thin, almost expressionless face: her dark grey eyes contracted to escape the blaze, yet shining as it were in spite of themselves: and her really beautiful lips, that looked almost as if they were sculptured.

Margaret Fernandez, taller (as midgets go: she was just thirteen), with her square white face and tangled hair, her elaboratish clothes.

Her little brother *Harry*, by some throw-back for all the world like a manikin Spaniard.

And the smaller Thorntons: *Edward*, mouse-coloured, with a general mousy (but pleasing) expression: *Rachel*, with tight short gold curls and a fat pink face (John's colouring watered down): and last of all *Laura*, a queer mite of three with heavy dark eyebrows, and blue eyes, a big head-top and a receding chin—as if the Procreative Spirit was getting a little hysterical by the time it reached her. A silver-age conception, *Laura's*, decidedly.

When the Norther blew itself out, it soon fell away almost dead calm. The morning they finally rounded Cape San Antonio was hot, blazing hot.

John was sitting outside the galley with the sailor called *Curtis*, who was instructing him in the neat mystery of a Turk's-head. Young *Henry Marpole* was

steering. Emily was messing around—not talking, just being by him.

As for the other sailors, they were all congregated in a ring, up in the bows, so that one saw nothing but their backs. But every now and then a general guffaw, and a sudden surging of the whole group, showed they were up to something or other.

John presently tiptoed forward, to see what it might be. He thrust his bullet-head among their legs, and worked his way in till he had as good a view as the earliest comer.

He found they had got the old monkey, and were filling him up with rum. First they gave him biscuit soaked in it: then they dipped rags in a pannikin of the stuff, and squeezed them into his mouth. Then they tried to make him drink direct: but that he would not do—it only wasted a lot of spirit.

John felt a vague horror at all this: though of course he did not guess the purpose behind it.

Anaesthetized or not, the operation on him was to proceed.

But the moment the blade touched flesh, with an awful screech the mommet contrived to fling off his cage—leapt on the surgeon's head—leapt from there high in the air—caught the forestay—and in a twinkling was away and up high in the fore-rigging.

Then began the hue and cry. Sixteen men flinging about in lofty acrobatics, all to catch one poor old drunk monkey. For he was drunk as a lord, and sick as a cat. His course varied between wild and hair-raising leaps (a sort of inspired gymnastics), and doleful incompetent reelings on a taut rope which threatened at every moment to catapult him into the sea. But even so they could never quite catch him.

No wonder that all the children, now, stood open-mouthed and open-eyed on the deck beneath in the sun till their necks nearly broke—*such* a Free Fun Fair and Circus!

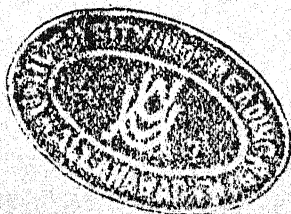
And no wonder that on that passenger-schooner which Marpole, before going below, had sighted drifting towards them from the direction of the Black Key channel, the ladies had left the shade of the awning and were crowding at the rail, parasols twirling, lorgnettes and opera-glasses in action, all twittering like a cage of linnets. Just too far off to distinguish the tiny quarry, they might well have wondered what sort of a bedlam-vessel of sea-acrobats the light easterly air was bearing them down upon.

They were so interested that presently a boat was hoisted out, and the ladies—and some gentlemen as well—crowded into it.

Poor little Jacko missed his hold at last: fell plump on the deck and broke his neck. That was the end of him—and of the hunt too, of course. The aerial ballet was over, in its middle, with no final tableau. The sailors began, in twos and threes, to slide to the deck.

But the visitors were already on board.

That is how the *Clorinda* really was taken. There was no display of artillery—but then, Captain Marpole could hardly know this, seeing he was below in his bunk at the time. Henry was steering by that sixth sense which only comes into operation when the other five are asleep. The mate and crew had been so intent on what they were doing that the Flying Dutchman himself might have laid alongside, for all they cared.



Indeed, the whole manœuvre was executed so quietly that Captain Marpole never even woke—incredible though this will seem to a seaman. But then, Marpole had begun life as a successful coal-merchant.

The mate and crew were bundled into the fo'c'sle (the Fox-hole, the children thought it was called), and confined there, the scuttle being secured with a couple of nails.

The children themselves were shepherded, as related, into the deck-house, where the chairs, and perfectly useless pieces of old rope, and broken tools, and dried-up paint-pots were kept, without taking alarm. But the door was immediately shut on them. They had to wait for hours and hours before anything else happened—nearly all day, in fact: and they got very bored, and rather cross.

The actual number of the men who had effected the capture cannot have been more than eight or nine, most of them 'women' at that, and not armed—at least with any visible weapon. But a second boatload soon followed them from the schooner. These, for form's sake, were armed with muskets. But there was no possible resistance to fear. Two long nails through the scuttle can secure any number of men pretty effectually.

With this second boatload came both the captain and the mate. The former was a clumsy great fellow, with a sad, silly face. He was bulky; yet so ill-proportioned one got no impression of power. He was modestly dressed in a drab shore-going suit: he was newly shaven, and his sparse hair was pomaded so that it lay in a few dark ribbons across his baldish head-top. But all this shore-decency of appearance only accentuated his big splodgy

brown hands, stained and scarred and corned with his calling. Moreover, instead of boots he wore a pair of gigantic heel-less slippers in the Moorish manner, which he must have sliced with a knife out of some pair of dead sea-boots. Even his great spreading feet could hardly keep them on, so that he was obliged to walk at the slowest of shuffles, flop-flop along the deck. He stooped, as if always afraid of banging his head on something; and carried the backs of his hands forward, like an orang-outang.

Meanwhile the men set to work methodically but very quietly to remove the wedges that held the battens of the hatches, getting ready to haul up the cargo.

Their leader took several turns up and down the deck before he seemed able to make up his mind to the interview: then lowered himself into Marpole's cabin, followed by his mate.

This mate was a small man: very fair, and intelligent-looking beside his chief. He was almost dapper, in a quiet way, in his dress.

They found Captain Marpole even now only half awake: and the stranger stood for a moment in silence, nervously twiddling his cap in his hands. When he spoke at last, it was with a soft German accent:

'Excuse me,' he began, 'but would you have the goodness to lend me a few stores?'

Captain Marpole stared in astonishment, first at him and then at the much be-painted faces of the 'ladies' pressed against his cabin skylight.

'Who the devil are you?' he contrived to ask at last.

'I hold a commission in the Columbian navy,' the stranger explained: 'and I am in need of a few stores'.

(Meanwhile his men had the hatches off, and were

preparing to help themselves to everything in the ship.)

Marpole looked him up and down. It was barely conceivable that even the Columbian navy should have such a figure of an officer. Then his eye wandered back to the skylight:

'If you call yourself a man-of-war, sir, who in Heaven's name are *those*?' As he pointed, the smirking faces hastily retreated.

The stranger blushed.

'They are rather difficult to explain,' he admitted ingenuously.

'If you had said *Turkish* navy, that would have been more reasonable-sounding!' said Marpole.

But the stranger did not seem to take the joke. He stood, silent, in a characteristic attitude: rocking himself from foot to foot, and rubbing his cheek on his shoulder.

Suddenly Marpole's ear caught the muffled racketing forward. Almost at the same time a bump that shivered the whole barque told that the schooner had been laid alongside.

'What's that?' he exclaimed. 'Is there some one in my hold?'

'Stores . . .' mumbled the stranger.

Marpole up to now had lain growling in his bunk like a dog in its kennel. Now for the first time realizing that something serious was afoot he flung himself out and made for the companion-way. The little fair silent man tripped him up, and he fell against the table.

'You had much better stay here, yes?' said the big man. 'My fellows shall keep a tally, you shall be paid in full for everything we take.'

The eyes of the marine coal-merchant gleamed momentarily:

'You'll have to pay for this outrage to a pretty tune!' he growled.

'I will pay you,' said the stranger, with a sudden magnificence in his voice, 'at the very least five thousand pounds!'

Marpole stared in astonishment.

'I will write you an order on the Columbian government for that amount,' the other went on.

Marpole thumped the table, almost speechless:

'D'you think I believe that cock-and-bull story?' he thundered.

Captain Jonsen made no protest.

'Do you realize that you are technically guilty of *piracy*, making a forced requisition on a British ship like this, even if you pay every farthing?'

Still Jonsen made no reply: though the bored expression of his mate was lit up for a moment by a smile.

'You'll pay me in *cash*!' Marpole concluded. Then he went off on a fresh tack: 'Though how the devil you got on board without being called beats me!—Where's my mate?'

Jonsen began in a toneless voice, as if by rote: 'I will write you an order for five thousand pounds: three thousand for the stores, and two thousand you will give me in money.'

'We know you've got specie on board,' interjected the little fair mate, speaking for the first time.

'Our information is certain!' declared Jonsen.

Marpole at last went white and began to sweat. It took even Fear an extraordinary long time to penetrate his thick skull. But he denied that he had any treasure on board.

'Is that your answer?' said Jonsen. He drew a heavy

pistol from his side pocket. 'If you do not tell us the truth, your life shall pay the forfeit.' His voice was peculiarly gentle, and mechanical, as if he did not attach much meaning to what he said. 'Do not expect mercy, for this is my profession, and in it I am inured to blood.'

A frightful squawking from the deck above told Marpole that his chickens were being moved to new quarters.

In an agony of feeling Marpole told him that he had a wife and children, who would be left destitute if his life was taken.

Jonsen, with rather a perplexed look on his face, put the gun back in his pocket, and the two of them began to search for themselves, at the same time stripping the saloon and cabins of everything they contained: fire-arms, wearing apparel, the bedclothes, and even (as Marpole with a rare touch of accuracy mentioned in his report) the bell-pulls.

Overhead there was a continuous bumping: the rolling of casks, cases, etc.

'Remember,' Jonsen went on over his shoulder while he searched, 'money cannot recall life, nor in the least avail you when you are dead. If you regard your life in the least, at once acquaint me with the hiding-place, and your life shall be safe.'

Marpole's only reply was again to invoke the thought of his wife and children (he was, as a matter of fact, a widower: and his only relative, a niece, would be the better off by his death to the tune of some ten thousand pounds).

But this reiteration seemed to give the mate an idea: and he began to talk to his chief rapidly in a language Marpole had never even heard. For a moment a curious

glint came into Jonsen's eye: but soon he was chuckling in the sentimentalest manner, and rubbing his hands.

The mate went on deck to prepare things.

Marpole had no inkling of what was afoot. The mate went on deck to prepare his plan, whatever it was: and Jonsen busied himself with a last futile search for the hiding-place, in silence.

Presently the mate shouted down to him, and he ordered Marpole on deck.

Poor Marpole groaned. Unloading cargo is inclined to be a messy business any way: but these visitors had been none too careful. There is no smell in the world worse than when molasses and bilge-water marry: now it was let loose like ten thousand devils. His heart was almost broken when he saw the havoc that had been made with the cargo: broken cases, casks, bottles, all about the deck: everything in the greatest confusion: tarpaulins cut to pieces: hatches broken.

From the deck-house came the piercing voice of Laura:
'I want to come out!'

The Spanish ladies seemed to have returned to the schooner. His own men were shut up in the fo'c'sle. It was obvious where all the children were, for Laura was not the only vociferator. But the only persons to be seen were six members of the visiting crew, who stood in a line, facing the deck-house, a musket apiece.

It was the little mate who now took charge of the situation:

'Where is your specie hid, Captain?'

The musketeers having their backs to him, 'Go to the Devil!' replied Marpole.

A startling volley rang out: six neat holes were punctured in the top of the deck-house.

'Hi! Steady there, what are you doing?' John cried out indignantly from within.

'If you refuse to tell us, next time their aim will be a foot lower.'

'You fiends!' cried Marpole.

'Will you tell me?'

'No!'

'Fire!'

The second row of holes can only have missed the taller children by a few inches.

There was a moment's silence: then a sudden wild shriek from within the deck-house. It was so terrified a sound not their own mothers could have told which throat it came from. One only, though.

The stranger-captain had been slouching about in an agitated way: but at that shriek he turned on Marpole, his face purple with a sudden fury:

'Now will you say?'

But Marpole was now completely master of himself. He did not hesitate:

'NO!'

'Next time he gives the order it will be to shoot right through their little bodies!'

So that was what Marpole had meant in his letter by '*every possible threat which villainy could devise*'! But even by this he was not to be daunted:

'No, I tell you!'

Heroic obstinacy! But instead of giving the fatal order, Jonsen lifted a paw like a bear's, and banged Marpole's jaw with it. The latter fell to the deck, stunned.

It was then they took the children out of the deck-house.

They were not really much frightened; except Mar-

garet, who did seem to be taking it all to heart rather. Being shot at is so unlike what one expects it to be that one can hardly connect the two ideas enough to have the appropriate emotions, the first few times. It is not half so startling as some one jumping out on you with a '*Boo!*' in the dark, for instance. The boys were crying a little: the girls were hot and cross and hungry.

'What were you doing?' Rachel asked brightly of one of the firing party.

But only the captain and the mate could speak English. The latter, ignoring Rachel's question, explained that they were all to go on board the schooner—'to have some supper,' he said.

He had all a sailor's reassuring charm of manner. So under the charge of two Spanish seamen they were helped over the bulwarks onto the smaller vessel, which was just casting off.

There the strange sailors broke open a whole case of crystallized fruits, on which they might turn the edge of their long appetites as much as they would.

When poor stunned Captain Marpole came to his senses, it was to find himself tied to the mainmast. Several handfuls of shavings and splintered wood were piled round his feet, and Jonsen was sprinkling them plentifully with gun-powder—though not perhaps enough, it is true, to 'blow up the ship and all in it'.

The small fair mate stood at hand in the gathering dusk with a lighted torch, ready to fire the pyre.

What could a man do in such straits? At that dreadful moment the gallant old fellow had to admit that he was beaten at last. He told them where his freight-money—some £900—was hidden: and they let him go.

Just as the darkness closed in, the last of the pirates returned to their ship. Not a sound was to be heard of the children: but Marpole guessed that they had been taken there too.

iii

You would have thought that supper on the schooner that night would have been a hilarious affair. But, somehow, it was *manqué*.

A prize of such value had naturally put the crew in the best of humours: and a meal which consisted mainly of crystallized fruit, followed as an afterthought by bread and chopped onions served in one enormous communal bowl, eaten on the open deck under the stars, after bed-time, should have done the same by the children. But nevertheless both parties were seized by a sudden, overpowering, and most unexpected fit of shyness. Consequently no state banquet was ever so formal, or so boring.

I suppose it was the lack of a common language which first generated the infection. The Spanish sailors, used enough to this difficulty, grinned, pointed, and bobbed: but the children retired into a display of good manners which it would certainly have surprised their parents to see. Whereon the sailors became equally formal: and one poor monkeyfied little fellow who by nature belched continually was so be-nudged and be-winked by his companions, and so covered in confusion of his own accord, that presently he went away to eat by himself. Even then, so silent was this revel, he could still be heard faintly belching, half the ship's length away.

Perhaps it would have gone better if the captain and mate had been there, with their English. But they were

too busy, looking over the personal belongings they had brought from the barque, sorting out by the light of a lantern anything too easily identifiable and reluctantly committing it to the sea.

It was at the loud splashes made by a couple of empty trunks, stamped in large letters JAS. MARPOLE, that a roar of unassumed indignation arose from the neighbouring barque. The two paused in their work, astonished: why should a crew already spoiled of all they possessed take it so hardly when one heaved a couple of old worthless trunks in the sea?

It was inexplicable.

They continued their task, taking no further notice of the *Clorinda*.

Once supper was over, the social situation became even more awkward. The children stood about, not knowing what to do with their hands, or even their legs: unable to talk to their hosts, and feeling it would be rude to talk to each other, wishing badly that it was time to leave. If only it had been light they could have been happy enough exploring: but in the darkness there was nothing to do, nothing whatever.

The sailors soon found occupations of their own: and the captain and mate, as I have said, were already busy.

Once the sorting was over, however, there was nothing for Jonsen to do except return the children to the barque, and get well clear while the breeze and the darkness lasted.

But on hearing those splashes, Marpole's lively imagination had interpreted them in his own way. They suggested that there was now no reason to wait: indeed, every reason to be gone.

I think he was quite honestly misled.

It was after all but a small slip to say he had 'seen with his own eyes' what he had heard with his own ears: and the intention was pious.

He set his men feverishly to work: and when Captain Jonsen looked his way again, the *Clorinda*, with every stitch spread in the starlight, was already half a mile to leeward.

To pursue her, right in the track of shipping, was out of the question. Jonsen had to content himself with staring after her through his nightglass.

iv

Captain Jonsen set the little monkeyfied sailor, who had been so mortified earlier in the evening, to clear the schooner's fore-hold. The warps and brooms and fenders it contained were all piled to one side, and a sufficiency of bedclothes for the guests was provided from the plunder.

But nothing could now thaw them. They clambered down the ladder and received their blanket apiece in an uncomfortable silence. Jonsen hung about, anxious to be helpful in this matter of getting into beds which were not there, but not knowing how to set about it. So he gave it up at last, and swung himself up through the fore-hatch, talking to himself.

The last they saw of him was his fantastic slippers, hanging each from a big toe, outlined against the stars: but it never entered their heads to laugh.

Once, however, the familiar comfort of a blanket under their chins had begun to have its effect, and they were obviously quite alone, a little life did begin to return into these dumb statues.

The darkness was profound, only accentuated by the starlit square of the open hatchway. First the long silence was broken by some one turning over, almost freely. Then presently:

LAURA (*in slow sepulchral tones*). I don't like this bed.

RACHEL (*ditto*). I do.

LAURA. It's a horrid bed; there isn't any!

EMILY. }
JOHN. } Sh! Go to sleep!

EDWARD. I smell cockroaches.

EMILY. Sh!

EDWARD (*loudly and hopefully*). They'll bite all our nails off, because we haven't washed, and our skin, and our hair, and——

LAURA. There's a cockroach in my bed! Get out!

(*You could hear the brute go zooming away. But Laura was already out too.*)

EMILY. Laura! Go back to bed!

LAURA. I can't when there's a cockroach in it!

JOHN. Get into bed again, you little fool! He's gone long ago!

LAURA. But I expect he has left his wife.

HARRY. They don't have wives, they're wives themselves.

RACHEL. Ow!—Laura, stop it!—Emily, Laura's walking on me!

EMILY. Lau-RER!

LAURA. Well, I must walk on something!

EMILY. Go to sleep!

(*Silence for a while.*)

LAURA. I haven't said my prayers.

EMILY. Well, say them lying down.

RACHEL. She mustn't, that's lazy.

JOHN. Shut up, Rachel, she must.

RACHEL. It's wicked! You go to sleep in the middle then. People who go to sleep in the middle ought to be damned, they ought.—Oughtn't they? (*Silence.*) Oughtn't they? (*Still silence.*) Emily, I say, oughtn't they?

JOHN. NO!

RACHEL (*dreamily*). I think there's lots more people ought to be damned than are.

(*Silence again.*)

HARRY. Marghie.

(*Silence.*)

Marghie!

(*Silence.*)

JOHN. What's up with Marghie? Won't she speak?

(*A faint sob is heard.*)

HARRY. I don't know.

(*Another sob.*)

JOHN. Is she often like this?

HARRY. She's an awful ass sometimes.

JOHN. Marghie, what's up?

MARGARET (*miserably*). Let me alone!

RACHEL. I believe she's frightened! (*Chants tauntingly*)
Marghie's got the bogies, the bogies, the bogies!

MARGARET (*sobbing out loud*). Oh you little fools!

JOHN. Well, what's the matter with you then?

MARGARET (*after a pause*). I'm older than any of you.

HARRY. Well, *that's* a funny reason to be frightened!

MARGARET. It isn't.

HARRY. It is!

MARGARET (*warming to the argument*). It isn't, I tell you!

HARRY. *It is!*

MARGARET (*smugly*). That's simply because you're all too young to know. . . .

JOHN. Oh, hit her, Emily!

EMILY (*sleepily*). Hit her yourself.

HARRY. But, Marghie, why are we here?

(*No answer.*)

Emily, why are we here?

EMILY (*indifferently*). I don't know. I expect they just wanted to change us.

HARRY. I expect so. But they never *told* us we were going to be changed.

EMILY. Grown-ups never *do* tell us things.

CHAPTER IV

The children all slept late, and all woke at the same moment as if by clockwork.

They were greatly astonished to find the schooner was no longer at sea. Instead, she was snugly moored against a little wooden wharf, in a pleasant land-locked bay; with a pleasant but untidy village, of white wooden houses with palm-leaf roofs, behind it; and the tower of a small sandstone church emerging from the abundant greenery. On the quay were a few well-dressed loungers, watching the preparations for unloading. The mate was directing the labours of the crew, who were rigging the cargo-gaff and getting ready for a hot morning's work.

The mate nodded cheerfully to the children, 'Here, you go on shore and amuse yourselves'.

So the children went ashore, holding hands in a long row, and promenaded the town in a formal sort of way. Laura wanted to go off by herself, but the others would not let her: and when they returned, the line was still unbroken. They had seen all there was to see, and no one had taken the least notice of them (so far as they were aware), and they wanted to start asking questions again.

Time was, these little ports of the Canal de Guani-guanico had been pretty prosperous, as bases for pirates: but it was a fleeting prosperity. There came the heroic attack of an American squadron under Captain Allen, in 1823, on the Bay of Sejuapo, their headquarters. From that blow (although it took many years to take full effect) the industry never really recovered: it dwindled and dwindled, like hand-weaving. One could

make money much faster in a city like Havana, and with less risk (if less respectably). Piracy had long since ceased to pay, and should have been scrapped years ago: but a vocational tradition will last on a long time after it has ceased to be economic, in a decadent form. Now, Santa Lucia—and piracy—continued to exist because they always had: but for no other reason. Such a haul as the *Clorinda* did not come once in a blue moon. Every year the amount of land under cultivation dwindled, and the pirate schooners were abandoned to rot against the wharves or ignominiously sold as traders. The young men left for Havana or the United States. The maidens yawned. The local grandees increased in dignity as their numbers and property dwindled: an idyllic, simple-minded country community, oblivious of the outer world and of its own approaching oblivion.

'I don't think I should like to live here,' John decided, when they got back to the ship.

Meanwhile the cargo had been unloaded onto the quay: and after the siesta a crowd of about a hundred people gathered round, poking and discussing. The auction was about to begin. Captain Jonsen tramped about rather in the way of everybody, but especially annoying the mate by shouting contrary directions every minute. The latter had a ledger, and a number of labels with numbers on them which he was pasting onto the various bales and packages. The sailors were building a kind of temporary stage—the thing was to be done in style.

Every moment the crowd increased. Because they all talked Spanish it was a pantomime to the children: like puppets acting, not like real people moving and talking.

So they discovered what a fascinating game it is to watch foreigners, whose very simplest words mean nothing to you, and try to guess what they are about.

Moreover, these were all such funny-looking people: they moved about as if they were kings, and spat all the time, and smoked thin black cigars, the blue smoke of which ascended from their enormous hats as from censers.

At one moment there was a diversion—the crowd suddenly gaped, and there staggered onto the stage the whole crew of the schooner carrying a huge pair of scales: it was always on the point of being too much for them, and running suddenly away with them in another direction.

There were quite a number of ladies in the crowd—old ones, they seemed to the children. Some were thin and dried up, like monkeys: but most were fat, and one was fatter than all of them and treated with the greatest respect (perhaps for her moustache). She was the wife of the Chief Magistrate—Señora del Illustrious Juzgado del Municipal de Santa Lucia, to give her her title. She had a rocking-chair of suitable strength and width, which was carried by a short squinting negro and set in the very middle of the scene, right in front of the platform. There she throned herself: and the negro stood behind her, holding a violet silk sunshade over her head.

No one can doubt that she immediately became the most noticeable thing in the picture.

She had a powerful bass voice, and when she uttered some jocundity (as she repeatedly did), every one heard it, however much they were chattering among themselves.

The children, as was their custom, wormed their way

without any excess of civility through the crowd and grouped themselves round her throne.

The captain either did not know, or suddenly refused to know, a single word of Spanish: so the auctioneering devolved on the mate. The latter mounted the stage: and with a great assumption of competence began.

But auctioneering is an art: it is as easy to write a sonnet in a foreign tongue as to conduct a successful auction.

This little Viennese had been to a good school, it is true: for he had once resided in Wales, where one sees auctioneering in its finest flower. In Welsh, or English, or even in his native tongue, he could have acquitted himself fairly well: but in Spanish, just that margin of power was lacking to him. The audience remained stern, cold, critical, bidding grudgingly.

When the third lot of coffee came to be dealt with, there was even the beginning of a rather nasty row. The children were highly scandalized: they had never seen grown-ups being rude to one another before. The captain had undertaken the weighing: and it was something to do with a habit he had of leaning against the scales while he read them. Being short-sighted, he could see the figures much more clearly like that: but it displeased the buyers, and they had a lot to say about it.

The captain, mortified, wrung his hands, and began to answer them in Danish. They rejoined in Spanish even more stingingly. He stumped off in a sulk: they could all conduct his affairs without him, if they weren't prepared to treat him with a little consideration.

But who would be less partial? The mate, angry, maintained that to elect one of the buyers was equally objectionable.

Thereon an earthquake began in the fat old lady, and gradually gathered enough force to lift her onto her feet. She took John by the shoulders, and pushed him before her to the scales. Then in a few witty, ringing words she suggested her solution—*he* should do the weighing.

The audience were pleased: but as soon as John understood he went very red, and wanted to escape. The rest of the children, on the other hand, were eaten with envy.

‘Mayn’t I help too?’ piped Rachel.

The despairing mate thought he saw just a forlorn hope in this. While John was being instructed, he gathered the other children: and out of the heap of miscellaneous clothing rigged them all out in a sort of fancy dress. Then he gave them the samples to carry round, and the sale began anew.

It had now assumed rather the character of a parochial bazaar. Even the Vicar was present—though less well shaved than he would have been in England, and cunninger-looking. He was one of the only buyers.

The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and minced and pranced and tugged each other’s turbans. But the crowd was a Latin one, not Nordic: and their endearing tricks failed altogether to arouse any interest. The sale went worse than ever.

Captain Jonsen, however, had his own idea of how to enliven a parochial bazaar that is proving a frost. He went on board, and mixed several gallons of that potion known in alcoholic circles as Hangman’s Blood (which is compounded of rum, gin, brandy, and porter). Innocent (merely beery) as it looks, refreshing as it tastes, it has the property of increasing rather than

allaying thirst, and so, once it has made a breach, soon demolishes the whole fort.

This he poured out into mugs, merely remarking that it was a noted English cordial, and gave it to the children to distribute among the crowd.

At once the Cubans began to show more interest in them than when they came bearing samples of arrow-root: and with their popularity their happiness increased, and like rococo Ganymedekins and Hebelettes they darted about the crowd, distributing the enticing poison to all who would.

When he saw what was on foot, the mate wiped his mouth in despair.

'Oh you fool!' he groaned.

But the captain himself was highly pleased with his ruse: kept rubbing his hands, and grinning, and winking.

'That'll liven 'em, eh?'

'Wait and see!' was all the mate let himself say. 'You just wait and see!'

Meanwhile, on the crowd the liquor was having exactly the effect the mate had foreseen. Instead of stimulating them, it dissolved completely whatever vestiges of attention they were still giving to the sale. He stepped down from the platform—gave it all up in despair. For they had now broken up into little groups, which discussed and argued their own affairs as if they were in a café. He in his turn went on board, and shut himself in his cabin—Captain Jonsen could deal with the mess he had made himself!

But alas! No worse host than Jonsen was ever born: he was utterly incapable of either understanding or controlling a crowd. All he could think of doing was plying them with more.

For the children the spectacle was an absorbing one. The whole nature of these people, as they drank, seemed to be changing: under their very eyes something seemed to be breaking up, like ice melting. Remember that to them this was a pantomime: no word spoken to explain, and so the eyes exercised a peculiar clearness.

It was rather as if the whole crowd had been immersed in water, and something dissolved out of them while the general structure yet remained. The tone of their voices changed, and they began to talk much slower, to move more slowly and elaborately. The expression of their faces became more candid, and yet more mask-like: hiding less, there was also less to hide. Two men even began to fight: but they fought so incompetently it was like a fight in a poetic play. Conversation, which before had a beginning and an end, now grew shapeless and interminable, and the women laughed a lot.

Jonsen looked round him perplexedly. Why had Otto abandoned the sale, now the crowd were all primed and ready? Probably he had some good reason, though. He was an incomprehensible man, that mate: but clever.

The truth is that Captain Jonsen was himself a man with a very weak head for liquor, and so he very seldom touched it, and knew little of the subtler aspects of its effects.

He paced up and down the dusty wharf at his usual slow shuffle, his head sunk forward in wretchedness, occasionally wringing his hands in the naturalest way, and even whimpering. When the priest came up to him confidentially and offered him a price for all that remained unsold he simply shook his head and continued his shuffle.

There was something a little nightmare-like in the whole scene which riveted the children's attention, and was very near the border of frightening them. It was with something of a struggle that at last Margaret said 'Let's go on the ship'. So they all went on board: and feeling a little unprotected even there descended into the hold, which was the safest place because they had already slept in it. They sat down on the kelson without doing or saying much, still with a vague apprehension, till boredom at last eliminated it.

'Oh I *wish* I had brought my paint-box!' said Emily, with a sigh fetched right up from her boots.

ii

That night, after they had all gone to bed, they saw in a half-asleep state a lantern bobbing up and down in the open hatch. It was held by José, the little monkeyfied one (they had already decided he was the nicest of the crew). He was grinning winningly, and beckoning to them.

Emily was too sleepy to move, and so were Laura and Rachel: so leaving them to lie, the others—Margaret, Edward, and John—scrambled on deck.

It was mysteriously quiet. Not a sign of the crew, but for José. In the bright starlight the town looked unnormally beautiful: there was music coming from one of the big houses up by the church. José conducted them ashore and up to this house: tiptoed up to the jalousies and signed to them to follow him.

As the light struck his face it became transfigured, so affected was he by the opulence within.

The children craned up to the level of the windows

and peered in too, oblivious of the mosquitoes making havoc of their necks.

It was a very grand sight. This was the house of the Chief Magistrate: and he was giving a dinner in honour of Captain Jonsen and his mate. There he sat at the head of the table, in uniform; very stiff, yet his little beard even stiffer than himself. His was the kind of dignity that grows from reserve and stillness, from freezing every minute like game which scents the hunter: while in total contrast to him there sat his wife, far more impressive than her husband, but doing it not by dignity but by that calculated abandon and vulgarity which transcends dignity. Indeed, her flinging about got the greater part of its effect from the very formality of her setting.

But it was not her, it was the meal which raped José's attention. It was certainly an impressive one. Together on the table were tomato soup, mountain mullet, crayfish, a huge red-snapper, land-crabs, rice and fried chicken, a young turkey, a small joint of goat-mutton, a wild duck, beef steak, fried pork, a dish of wild pigeons, sweet potatoes, yuca, wine, and guavas and cream.

It was a meal which would take a long time.

Captain Jonsen and the lady appeared to be on excellent terms: he pressing some project on her, and she, without the least loss of amiability, putting it on one side. What they were talking about, of course, the children could not hear. As a matter of fact, it was themselves. Captain Jonsen was trying to get the lady to discuss the disposal of his impromptu nursery: the most reasonable solution being plainly to leave them at Santa Lucia, more or less in her charge. But she was adept at eluding the importunate. It was not till the

banquet was over that he realized he had failed to make any arrangement whatever.

But long before this, before the dinner was ended and the dance began, the children were tired of the peep-show. So José tiptoed away with them, down to the back streets by the dock. Presently they came to a mysterious door at the bottom of a staircase, with a negro standing as if on guard. But he made no effort to stop them, and, José leading them, they climbed several flights to a large upper room.

The air was one you could hardly push through. The place was crowded with negroes, and a few rather smudgy whites: among whom they recognized most of the rest of the crew of the schooner.

At the far end was the most primitive stage you ever saw: there was a cradle on it, and a large star swung on the end of a piece of string. There was to be a nativity-play—rather early in the season. While the Chief Magistrate entertained the pirate captain and mate, the priest had got this up in honour of the pirate crew.

A nativity play, with real cattle.

The whole audience had arrived an hour early, so as to see the entry of the cow. The children were just in time for this.

The room was in the upper part of a warehouse, which had been built, through some freak of vanity, in the English fashion, several stories high; and was provided with the usual large door opening onto nothingness, with a beam-and-tackle over it. Many the load of gold-dust and arrowroot which must have once been hoisted into it: now, like most of the others at Santa Lucia, it had long since ceased to be used.

But to-day a new rope had been rove through the

block: and a broad belly-band put round the waist of the priest's protesting old cow.

Margaret and Edward lingered timidly near the top of the stairs; but John, putting his head down and burrowing like a mole, was not content till he had reached the open doorway. There he stood looking out into the darkness: where he saw a slowly revolving cow treading the air a yard from the sill, while at each revolution a negro reached out to the utmost limit of balance, trying to catch her by the tail and draw her to shore.

John, in his excitement, leaned out too far. He lost his balance and fell clear to the ground, forty feet, right on his head.

José gave a cry of alarm, sprang onto the cow's back, and was instantly lowered away—just as if the cinema had already been invented. He must have looked very comic. But what was going on inside him the while it is difficult to know. Such a responsibility does not often fall on an old sailor; and he would probably feel it all the more for that reason. As for the crowd beneath, they made no attempt to touch the body till José had completed his descent: they stood back and let him have a good look at it, and shake it, and so on. But the neck was quite plainly broken.

Margaret and Edward, however, had not any clear idea of what was going on, since they had not actually seen John fall. So they were rather annoyed when two of the schooner's crew appeared and insisted on their coming back to bed at once. They wanted to know where John was: but even more they wanted to know where José was, and why they weren't to be allowed to stay. However they obeyed, in the impossibility of asking questions, and started back to bed.

Just as they were about to go on board the schooner, they heard a huge report on their left, like a cannon. They turned; and looking past the quiet, silver town, with its palm-groves, to the hills behind, they saw a large ball of fire, travelling at a tremendous rate. It was quite close to the ground: and not very far off either—just beyond the church. It left a wake of the most brilliant blue, green, and purple blobs of light. For a while it hovered: then it burst, and the air was shortly charged with a strong sulphurous smell.

They were all frightened, the sailors even more than the children, and hastened on board.

In the small hours, Edward suddenly called Emily in his sleep. She woke up: 'What is it?'

'It's rather cow-catching, isn't it?' he asked anxiously, his eyes tight shut.

'What's the matter?'

He did not answer, so she roused him—or thought she had.

'I only wanted to see if you were a *real* Cow-catching Zomfanelia,' he explained in a kind voice: and was immediately deep asleep again.

In the morning they might easily have thought the whole thing a dream—if John's bed had not been so puzzlingly empty.

Yet, as if by some mute flash of understanding, no one commented on his absence. No one questioned Margaret, and she offered no information. Neither then nor thereafter was his name ever mentioned by anybody: and if you had known the children intimately you would never have guessed from *them* that he had ever existed.

CHAPTER V

When Destiny knocks the first nail in the coffin of a tyrant, it is seldom long before she knocks the last.

It was the very next morning that the schooner, in the lightest of airs, was sidling gently to leeward. The mate was at the wheel, shifting his weight from foot to foot with that rhythmic motion many steersmen affect, the better to get the feel of a finnick helm; and Edward was teaching the captain's terrier to beg, on the cabin-top. The mate shouted to him to hang on to something.

'Why?' said Edward.

'*Hang on!*' cried the mate again, spinning the wheel over as fast as he could to bring her into the wind.

The howling squall took her, through his promptness, almost straight in the nose; or it would have carried all away.

Up out of his cabin appeared the captain's shapeless brown head, cursing the mate as if it was *he* who had upset the apple-cart. He came up without his boots, in grey wool socks, and his braces hanging down his back.

'Get below!' muttered the mate furiously. 'I can manage her!'

The captain did not, however: still in his socks, he came up on deck and took the wheel out of the mate's hand. The latter went a dull brick-red: walked for'ard: then aft again: then went below and shut himself in his cabin.

In a few moments the wind had combed up some quite hearty waves: then it blew their tops off, and so flattened the sea out again, a sea that was black except for little whipt-up fountains of iridescent foam.

'Get my boots!' bellowed Jonsen at Edward.

Edward dashed down the companion with alacrity. It is a great moment, one's first order at sea; especially when it comes in an emergency. He reappeared with a boot in each hand, and a lurch flung him boots and all at the captain's feet. 'Never carry things in both hands,' said the captain, smiling pleasantly.

'Why?' asked Edward.

'Keep one hand to lay hold with.'

There was a pause.

'Some day I will teach you the three Sovereign Rules of Life.' He shook his head meditatively. 'They are very wise. But not yet. You are too young.'

'Why not?' asked Edward. 'When shall I be old enough?'

The captain considered, going over the Rules in his head.

'When you know which is windward and which is leeward, then I will teach you the first rule.'

Edward made his way forward, determined to qualify as soon as he possibly could.

When the worst of the squall was over they got the advantage of it, the schooner lying over lissomly and spinning along like a race-horse. The crew were in great spirits—chaffing the carpenter, who, they declared, had thrown his grindstone overboard as a life-buoy for the pig.

The children were in good spirits also. Their shyness was all gone now. The schooner lying over as she did, her wet deck made a most admirable toboggan-slide; and for half an hour they tobogganed happily on their bottoms from windward to leeward, shrieking with joy, fetching up in the lee-scuppers, which were mostly awash, and then climbing from thing to thing to the

windward bulwarks raised high in the air, and so all over again.

Throughout that half hour, Jonsen at the wheel said not a single word. But at last his pent-up irritation broke out:

‘Hi! You! Stop that!’

They gazed at him in astonishment and disillusion.

There is a period in the relations of children with any new grown-up in charge of them, the period between first acquaintance and the first reproof, which can only be compared to the primordial innocence of Eden. Once a reproof has been administered, this can never be recovered again.

Jonsen now had done it.

But he was not content with that—he was still bursting with rage:

‘Stop it! Stop it, I tell you!’

(They had already done so, of course.)

The whole unreasonableness, the monstrosity of the imposition of these brats on his ship suddenly came over him, and summed itself up in a single symbol:

‘If you go and wear holes in your drawers, do you think *I* am going to mend them?—Lieber Gott! What do you think I am, eh? What do you think this ship is? What do you think we all are? To mend your drawers for you, eh? *To mend . . . your . . . drawers?*’

There was a pause, while they all stood thunderstruck.

But even now he had not finished.

‘Where do you think you’ll get new ones, eh?’ he asked, in a voice explosive with rage. Then he added, with an insulting coarseness of tone: ‘And I’ll not have you going about my ship without them! See?’

Scarlet to the eyes with outrage they retreated to the

bows. They could hardly believe so unspeakable a remark had crossed human lips. They assumed an air of lightness, and talked together in studied loud voices: but their joy was dashed for the day.

So it was that—small as a man's hand—a spectre began to show over their horizon: the suspicion at last that this was *not* all according to plan, that they might even not be wanted. For a while their actions showed the unhappy wariness of the uninvited guest.

Later in the afternoon, Jonsen, who had not spoken again, but looked from time to time acutely miserable, was still at the wheel. The mate had shaved himself and put on shore clothes, as a parable: he now appeared on deck: pretended not to see the captain, but strolled like a passenger up to the children and entered into conversation with them.

'If I'm not fit to steer in foul weather, I'm not fit to steer in fair!' he muttered, but without glancing at the captain. 'He can take the helm all day and night, for all the help *I'll* give him!'

The captain appeared equally not to see the mate. He looked quite ready to take both watches till kingdom come.

'If *he'd* been at the wheel when that squall struck us,' said the mate under his voice but with biting passion, 'he'd have lost the ship! He's no more eye for a squall coming than a sucker-fish! And he knows it, too: that's what makes him go on this way!'

The children did not answer. It shocked them deeply to have to see a grown-up, a should-be Olympian, displaying his feelings. In exact opposition to the witnesses at the Transfiguration, they felt it would have been good for them to be almost anywhere rather than there. He

was totally unconscious of their discomfort, however: too self-occupied to notice how they avoided catching his eye.

'Look! There's a steamship!' exclaimed Margaret, with much too bright a brightness.

The mate glowered at it.

'Aye, they'll be the death of us, those steamers,' he said. 'Every year there's more of them. They'll be using them for men-of-war next, and then where'll we be? Times are bad enough without steamers.'

But while he spoke he wore a preoccupied expression as if he were more concerned with what was going on at the back of his mind than with what went on in the front.

'Did you ever hear about what happened when the first steamer put to sea in the Gulf of Paria?' he asked, however.

'No, what?' asked Margaret, with an eagerness that even exceeded the necessities of politeness in its falsity.

'She was built on the Clyde, and sailed over. (Nobody thought of using steam for a long ocean voyage in those days.) The Company thought they ought to make a to-do—to popularize her, so to speak. So the first time she put to sea under her own power, they invited all the big-wigs on board: all the Members of Assembly in Trinidad, and the Governor and his staff, and a Bishop. It was the Bishop what did the trick.'

His story died out: he became completely absorbed in watching sidelong the effect of his bravado on the captain.

'Did what?' asked Margaret.

'Ran 'em aground.'

'But what did they let him steer for?' asked Edward.

'They might have known he couldn't!'

'Edward! How dare you talk about a Bishop in that rude way!' admonished Rachel.

'It wasn't the steamer he ran aground, sonny,' said the mate: 'it was a poor innocent little devil of a pirate craft, that was just beating up for the Boca Grande in a northerly breeze.'

'Good for him!' said Edward. 'How did he do it?'

'They were all sea-sick, being on a steamer for the first time: the way she rolls, not like a decent sailing-vessel. There wasn't a man who could stay on deck—except the Bishop, and he just thrived on it. So when the poor little pirate cut under her bows, and seen her coming up in the eye of the wind, no sail set, with a cloud of smoke amidships and an old Bishop bung in the middle of the smoke, and her paddles making as much turmoil as a whale trying to scratch a flea in its ear, he just beached his vessel and took to the woods. Never went to sea again, he didn't; started growing coco-nuts. But there was one poor fish was in such a hurry he broke his leg, and they came ashore and found him. When he saw the Bishop coming for him he started yelling out it was the Devil.'

'O-oh!' gasped Rachel, horror-struck.

'How silly of him,' said Edward.

'I don't know so much!' said the mate. 'He wasn't too far wrong! Even since that, they've been the death of our profession, Steam and the Church . . . what with steaming, and what with preaching, and steaming and preaching.'

Captain Jonsen had lashed the wheel, and came up, his face piteous with distress.

'Otto! Mein Schatz . . .!' he began, laying his great bear's-arm round the mate's neck. Without more ado

they went below together, and a sailor came aft unbidden and took the wheel.

For hours a merry but rather tedious hubble-bubble, suggesting liquor, was heard ascending from the cabin skylight. As evening drew on, the breeze having dropped away almost to a calm, the steersman reported that both Jonsen and Otto were now fast asleep, their heads on each other's shoulders across the cabin table. As he had long forgotten what the course was, but had been simply steering by the wind, and there was now no wind to steer by, he (the steersman) concluded the wheel could get on very well without him.

The reconciliation of the captain and the mate deserved to be celebrated by all hands with a blind.

A rum-cask was broached: and the common sailors were soon as unconscious as their betters.

Altogether this was one of the unpleasantest days the children had spent in their lives.

Jonsen did not know where he might be within two hundred miles; and being no sextant-man, but an incurable dead-reckoner, he had no means of finding out. This did not worry him very greatly, however, because sooner or later one of two things might happen: he might catch sight of some bit of land he recognized, or he might capture some vessel better informed than himself. Meanwhile, since he had no particular destination, one bit of sea was much the same to him as another.

But Captain Jonsen was not sorry to be out of the public eye for a while. Before he had left Santa Lucia, news had reached him of the *Clorinda* putting into Havana; and of the fantastic tale Marpole was telling. The 'twelve masked gunports' had amused him hugely, since he was altogether without artillery: but when he

heard Marpole accused him of murdering the children—Marpole, that least reputable of skunks—his anger had broken out in one of its sudden explosions. For it was unthinkable—during those first few days—that he would ever touch a hair of their heads, or even speak a cross word to them. They were still a sort of holy novelty then: it was not till their shyness had worn off that he had begun to regret so whole-heartedly the failure of his attempt to leave them behind with the Chief Magistrate's wife.

CHAPTER VI

The weeks passed in aimless wandering. For the children, the lapse of time acquired once more the texture of a dream: things ceased happening: every inch of the schooner was now as familiar to them as the *Clorinda* had been, or Ferndale: they settled down quietly to grow, as they had done at Ferndale, and as they would have done, had there been time, on the *Clorinda*.

And then an event did occur, to Emily, of considerable importance. She suddenly realized who she was.

There is little reason that one can see why it should not have happened to her five years earlier, or even five later; and none, why it should have come that particular afternoon.

She had been playing houses in a nook right in the bows, behind the windlass (on which she had hung a devil's-claw as a door-knocker); and tiring of it was walking rather aimlessly aft, thinking vaguely about some bees and a fairy queen, when it suddenly flashed into her mind that she was *she*.

Once fully convinced of this astonishing fact, that she was now Emily Bas-Thornton (why she inserted the 'now' she did not know, for she certainly imagined no transmigrational nonsense of having been any one else before), she began seriously to reckon its implications.

First, what agency had so ordered it that out of all the people in the world who she might have been, she was this particular one, this Emily: born in such-and-such a year out of all the years in Time, and encased in this particular rather pleasing little casket of flesh? Had she chosen herself, or had God done it?

Secondly, why had all this not occurred to her before?

She had been alive for over ten years now, and it had never once entered her head. She felt like a man who suddenly remembers at eleven o'clock at night, sitting in his own arm-chair, that he had accepted an invitation to go out to dinner that night. There is no reason for him to remember it now: but there seems equally little why he should not have remembered it in time to keep his engagement. How could he have sat there all the evening without being disturbed by the slightest mis-giving? How could Emily have gone on being Emily for ten years without once noticing this apparently obvious fact?

It must not be supposed that she argued it all out in this ordered, but rather long-winded fashion. Each consideration came to her in a momentary flash, quite innocent of words: and in between her mind lazed along, either thinking of nothing or returning to her bees and the fairy queen. If one added up the total of her periods of conscious thought, it would probably reach something between four and five seconds; nearer five, perhaps; but it was spread out over the best part of an hour.

Well then, granted she was Emily, what were the consequences, besides enclosure in that particular little body (which now began on its own account to be aware of a sort of unlocated itch, most probably somewhere on the right thigh), and lodgment behind a particular pair of eyes?

It implied a whole series of circumstances. In the first place, there was her family, a number of brothers and sisters from whom, before, she had never entirely dissociated herself; but now she got such a sudden feeling of being a discrete person that they seemed as separate from her as the ship itself. However, willy-nilly she was

almost as tied to them as she was to her body. And then there was this voyage, this ship, this mast round which she had wound her legs. She began to examine it with almost as vivid an illumination as she had studied the skin of her hands. And when she came down from the mast, what would she find at the bottom? There would be Jonsen, and Otto, and the crew: the whole fabric of a daily life which up to now she had accepted as it came, but which now seemed vaguely disquieting. What was going to happen? Were there disasters running about loose, disasters which her rash marriage to the body of Emily Thornton made her vulnerable to?

A sudden terror struck her: did any one know? (Know, I mean, that she was some one in particular, Emily—perhaps even God—not just any little girl.) She could not tell why, but the idea terrified her. It would be bad enough if they should discover she was a particular person—but if they should discover she was God! At all costs she must hide *that* from them.—But suppose they knew already, had simply been hiding it from her (as guardians might from an infant king)? In that case, as in the other, the only thing to do was to continue to behave as if she did not know, and so outwit them.

But if she was God, why not turn all the sailors into white mice, or strike Margaret blind, or cure somebody, or do some other Godlike act of the kind? Why should she hide it? She never really asked herself why: but instinct prompted her strongly of the necessity. Of course, there was the element of doubt (suppose she had made a mistake, and the miracle missed fire): but more largely it was the feeling that she would be able to deal with the situation so much better when she was a little older. Once she had declared herself there would be no turn-

ing back; it was much better to keep her godhead up her sleeve for the present.

Grown-ups embark on a life of deception with considerable misgiving, and generally fail. But not so children. A child can hide the most appalling secret without the least effort, and is practically secure against detection. Parents, finding that they see through their child in so many places the child does not know of, seldom realize that, if there is some point the child really gives his mind to hiding, their chances are nil.

So Emily had no misgivings when she determined to preserve her secret, and needed have none.

Down below on the deck the smaller children were repeatedly crowding themselves into a huge coil of rope, feigning sleep and then suddenly leaping out with yelps of panic and dancing round it in consternation and dismay. Emily watched them with that impersonal attention one gives to a kaleidoscope. Presently Harry spied her, and gave a hail.

‘Emilee-ee! Come down and play House-on-fire!’

At that, her normal interests momentarily revived. Her stomach as it were leapt within her sympathetically toward the game. But it died in her as suddenly; and not only died, but she did not even feel disposed to waste her noble voice on them. She continued to stare without making any reply whatever.

‘Come on!’ shouted Edward.

‘Come and play!’ shouted Laura. ‘Don’t be a pig!’

Then in the ensuing stillness Rachel’s voice floated up:

‘Don’t call her, Laura, we don’t really want her.’

But Emily was completely unaffected—only glad that for the present they were all right by themselves. She was already beginning to feel the charge of the party a burden.

It had automatically devolved on her with the defection of Margaret.

It was puzzling, this Margaret business. She could not understand it, and it disturbed her. It dated back really to that night, about a week ago, when she herself had so unaccountably bitten the captain. The memory of her own extraordinary behaviour gave her now quite a little shiver of alarm.

Every body had been very drunk that night, and making a terrible racket—it was impossible to get to sleep. So at last Edward had asked her to tell them a story. But she was not feeling ‘storyable,’ so they had asked Margaret; all except Rachel, who had begged Margaret not to, because she wanted to think, she said. But Margaret had been very pleased at being asked, and had begun a very stupid story about a princess who had lots and lots of clothes and was always beating her servant for making mistakes and shutting him up in a dark cupboard. The whole story, really, had been nothing but clothes and beating, and Rachel had *begged* her to stop.

In the middle, a sort of rabble of sailors had come down the ladder, very slowly and with much discussion. They stood at the bottom in a knot, swaying a little and all turned inwards on one of their number. It was so dark one could not see who this was. They were urging it him to do something—he hanging back.

Oh, damn it!’ he cried in a thick voice. ‘Bring me
Once she I can’t see where dey are!’

It was the voice of the captain—but how altered! There was a sort of suppressed excitement in it. Some one lit a lantern and held it up in the middle. Captain Jonsen stood on his legs half like a big sack of flour, half like a waiting tiger.

‘What do you want?’ Emily had asked kindly.

But Captain Jonsen stood irresolute, shifting his weight from foot to foot, as if he was steering.

‘You’re drunk, aren’t you?’ Rachel had piped, loudly and disapprovingly.

But it was Margaret who had behaved most queerly. She had gone yellow as cheese, and her eyes large with terror. She was shivering from head to foot as if she had the fever. It was absurd. Then Emily remembered how stupidly frightened Margaret had been the very first night on the schooner.

At that moment Jonsen had staggered up to Emily, and putting one hand under her chin had begun to stroke her hair with the other. A sort of blind vertigo seized her: she caught his thumb and bit as hard as she could: then, terrified at her own madness, dashed across the hold to where the other children were gathered in a wondering knot.

‘What *have* you done!’ cried Laura, pushing her away angrily: ‘Oh you wicked girl, you’ve hurt him!’

Jonsen was stamping about, swearing and sucking his thumb. Edward had produced a handkerchief, and between them all they had managed to tie it up. He stood staring at the bandaged member for a few moments: shook his head like a wet retriever and retreated on deck, dang-danging under his breath. Margaret had then been so sick they thought she must really have caught fever, and they couldn’t get any sense out of her at all.

As Emily, with her new-found consciousness, recapitulated the scene, it was like re-reading a story in a book, so little responsibility did she feel for the merely mechanical creature who had bitten the captain's thumb. Nor was she even very interested: it had been queer, but then there was very little in life which didn't seem queer, now.

As for Jonsen, he and Emily had avoided each other ever since, by mutual consent. She indeed had been in Coventry with everybody for biting him; none of the other children would play with her all the next day, and she recognized that she thoroughly deserved it—it was a *mad* thing to have done. And yet Jonsen, in avoiding her, had himself more the air of being ashamed than angry . . . which was unaccountable.

But what interested her more was the curious way Margaret had gone on, those next few days.

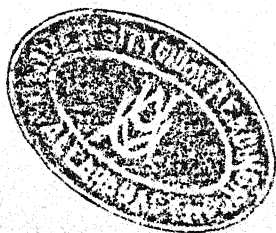
For some time she had behaved very oddly indeed. At first she seemed exaggeratedly frightened of all the men: but then she had suddenly taken to following them about the deck like a dog—not Jonsen, it is true, but Otto especially. Then suddenly she had departed from them altogether and taken up her quarters in the cabin. The curious thing was that now she avoided them all utterly, and spent all her time with the sailors: and the sailors, for their part, seemed to take peculiar pains not only not to let her speak to, but even not to let her be seen by the other children.

Now they hardly saw her at all: and when they did she seemed so different they hardly recognized her: though where the difference lay it would be hard to say. Emily, from her perch at the mast-head, could just see the girl's head now, through the cabin skylight.

Further forward, José had joined the children at their game, and was crawling about on hands and knees with all of them on his back—a fire-engine, of course, such as they had seen in the illustrated magazines from England.

‘Emily!’ called Harry: ‘Come and play!’

Down with a rush fell the curtain on all Emily’s cogitations. In a second she was once more a happy little animal—*any* happy little animal. She slid down the shrouds like a real sailor, and in no time was directing the fire-fighting operations as imperiously as any other of this brigade of superintendents.



CHAPTER VII

They were all by now just as much at home on the schooner as they had been in Jamaica. Indeed, nothing very continuous was left of Ferndale for the youngest ones: only a number of luminous pictures of quite unimportant incidents. Emily of course remembered most things, and could put them together. The death of Tabby, for instance: she would never forget that as long as she lived. She could recollect, too, that Ferndale had tumbled down flat. And her Earthquake: she had been in an earthquake, and could remember every detail of *that*. Had it been as a result of the earthquake that Ferndale had tumbled down? That sounded likely. There had been quite a high wind at that time, too. . . . She could remember that they had all been bathing when the earthquake had come, and then had ridden somewhere on ponies. But they had been *in* the house when it fell down: she was pretty sure of that. It was all a little difficult to join up.—Then, when was it she had found that negro village? She could remember with a startling clearness bending down and feeling among the bamboo roots for the bubbling spring, then looking round and seeing the black children scampering away up the clearing. That must have been years and years ago. But clearer than everything was that awful night when Tabby had stalked up and down the room, his eyes blazing and his fur twitching, his voice melodious with tragedy, until those horrible black shapes had flown in through the fanlight and savaged him out into the bush. The horror of the scene was even increased because it had once or twice come back to her in dreams, and because when she dreamt it (though it seemed the

same) there was always some frightful difference. One night (and that was the worst of all) she had rushed out to rescue him, when her darling faithful Tabby had come up to her with the same horrible look on his face the captain had worn that time she bit his thumb, and had chased her down avenues and avenues and avenues and avenues of cabbage-palms, with Exeter House at the end of them never getting any nearer however much she ran. She knew, of course, it was not the real Tabby, but a sort of diabolic double: and Margaret had sat up an orange tree, jeering at her, gone as black as a negro.

Jamaica had faded into the past: England, to which they had supposed they were going, and of which a very curious picture had formerly been built up in their minds by their parents' constant references to it, receded again into the mists of myth. They lived in the present, adapted themselves to it, and might have been born in a hammock and christened at a binnacle before they had been there many weeks. They seemed to have no natural fear of heights, and the farther they were above the deck, the happier. On a calm day Edward used to hang by his knees from the cross-trees in order to feel the blood run into his head. The flying-jib, too, which was usually down, made an admirable cocoon for hide-and-seek: one took a firm grip of the hanks and robands, and swathed oneself in the canvas. Once suspecting Edward was hidden there, instead of going out on the jib-boom to look, the other children cast off the down-haul and then all together gave a great tug at the halyard which nearly pitched him into the sea. The shark myth is greatly exaggerated: it is untrue, for instance, that they can take a leg clean off at the hip—their bite is a tearing one, not a clean cut: and a practised

bather can keep them off easily with a welt on the nose each time they turn over to strike¹: but all the same, once overboard there would have been little hope for a small boy like Edward: and a severe wiggling they all got for their prank.

ii

Pigs grow quickly, quicker even than children: and much though the latter altered in the first month on board, the little black porker (whose name by the by was Thunder) altered even more. He soon grew to such a size one could not possibly allow him to lie on one's stomach any more: so, as his friendliness did not diminish, the functions were reversed, and it became a common thing to find one child, or a whole bench of them, sitting on his scaly side. They grew very fond of him indeed (especially Emily), and called him their Dear Love, their Only Dear, their Own True Heart, and other names. But he had only two things he ever said. When his back was being scratched he enunciated an occasional soft and happy grunt; and that same phrase (only in a different tone) had to serve for every other occasion and emotion—except one. When a particularly heavy lot of children sat down on him at once, he uttered the faintest ghost of a little moan, as affecting as the wind in a very distant chimney, as if the air in him was being squeezed out through a pin-hole.

One cannot wish for a more comfortable seat than an acquiescent pig.

'If I was the Queen,' said Emily, 'I should most certainly have a pig for a throne.'

'Perhaps she has,' suggested Harry.

¹ The tiger-shark of the South Seas is of course a very different cattle.

'He *does* like being scratched,' she added presently in a very sentimental tone, as she rubbed his scurfy back.

The mate was watching:

'I should think *you*'d like being scratched, if your skin was in that condition!'

'Oh how disgusting you are!' cried Emily, delighted.

But the idea took root.

'I don't think I should kiss him quite so much if I was you,' Emily presently advised Laura, who was lying with her arms tight round his neck and covering his briny snout with kisses from ring to ears.

'My pet! My love!' murmured Laura, by way of indirect protest.

The wily mate had foreseen that some estrangement would be necessary if they were ever to have fresh pork served without salt tears. He intended this to be the thin end of the wedge. But alas! Laura's mind was as humour-some an instrument to play as the Twenty-three-stringed Lute.

When dinner-time came, the children mustered for their soup and biscuit.

They were not overfed on the schooner: they were given little that is generally considered wholesome, or to contain vitamins: but they seemed none the worse. First the cook boiled the various non-perishable vegetables they carried in a big pot together for a couple of hours. Then a lump of salt beef from the cask forward, having been rinsed in a little fresh water, was added, and allowed to simmer with the rest till it was just cooked. Then it was withdrawn, and the captain and mate ate their soup first and their meat afterwards, out of plates, like gentlemen. After that, if it was a week-day, the meat was put to cool on the cabin shelf, ready to

warm up in to-morrow's soup, and the crew and children ate the liquor with biscuit: but if it was Sunday, the captain took the lump of meat and with a benevolent air cut it up in small pieces, as if indeed for a nursery, and mixed it up with the vegetables in the huge wooden bowl out of which crew and children all dipped. It was a very patriarchal way of feeding.

Even at dinner Margaret did not join the others, but ate in the cabin; though there were only two plates on the whole ship. Probably she used the mate's when he had finished.

Laura and Rachel fought that day to tears over a particularly succulent piece of yam. Emily let them. To make those two agree was a task she was wise not to undertake. Besides, she was very busy over her own dinner. Edward managed to silence them, however, by declaring in a most terrible voice: 'Shut up or I'll SABRE you!'

Emily's estrangement from the captain had reached by now a rather uncomfortable stage. When these things are fresh and new the two parties avoid meeting, and all is well: but after some days they are apt to forget, find themselves on the point of chatting, and then suddenly remember that they are not on speaking terms and have to retire in confusion. Nothing can be more uncomfortable for a child. The difficulty of effecting a reconciliation in this case was that both parties felt wholly in the wrong. Each repented the impulse of a momentary insanity, and neither had an inkling the other felt the same: thus each waited for the other to show signs of forgiveness. Moreover, while the captain had far the more serious reason for being ashamed of himself, Emily was naturally far the more sensitive and

concerned of the two: so it about balanced. Thus, if Emily rushed blithely up to the captain embracing a flying-fish, caught his eye and slunk round the other side of the galley, he put it down to a permanent feeling of condemnation and repulsion: blushed a deep purple and stared stonily at his wrinkling mainsail—and Emily wondered if he was *never* going to forget that bitten thumb.

But this afternoon things came to a head. Laura was trotting about behind him, striking her attitudes. Edward had at last discovered which was windward and which was leeward, and had come hot-foot to learn the first of the Sovereign Rules of Life: and Emily, with one of her wretched lapses of memory, was all agog at his elbow.

Edward was duly catechized and passed.

‘Dis is the first rule,’ said the captain: ‘*Never throw anything to windward except hot water or ashes.*’

Edward’s face developed exactly the look of bewilderment that was intended.

‘But *windward* is . . .’ he began: ‘I mean, wouldn’t they blow . . .’ then he stopped, wondering if he had got the terms the right way round after all. Jonsen was delighted at the success of this ancient joke. Emily, trying to stand on one leg, bewildered also, lost her balance and clutched at Jonsen’s arm. He looked at her—they all looked at her.

Much the best way of escaping from an embarrassing rencontre, when to walk away would be an impossible strain on the nerves, is to retire in a series of somersaults. Emily immediately started turning head over heels up the deck.

It was very difficult to keep direction, and the giddi-

ness was appalling; but she *must* keep it up till she was out of sight, or die.

Just then, Rachel, who was up the mainmast, dropped, for the first time, her marline-spike. She uttered a terrible shriek—for what *she* saw was a baby falling to dash its brains out on the deck.

Jonsen gave an ineffectual little grunt of alarm—men can never learn to give a full-bodied scream like a woman.

But Emily gave the most desperate yell of all, though several seconds after the other two: for the wicked steel stood quivering in the deck, having gouged a track through her calf on the way. Her wrought-up nerves and sickening giddiness joined with the shock and pain to give a heart-rending poignancy to her crying. Jonsen was by her in a second, caught her up, and carried her, sobbing miserably, down to the cabin. There sat Margaret, bending over ^{her} ^{to} mending, her slim shoulders hunched up, ^{and} ^{her} ^{head} ^{down} ^{and} ^{feeling} ^{deadly} ^{ill}.

'Get out!' said Jonsen, ⁱⁿ ^a ^{voice} ^{that} ^{avoided} ^{her} ^{eyes}. Without a word or sign Margaret ^{rose} ^{and} ^{climbed} ^{on} ^{deck}.

Jonsen smeared some Sol ^{on} ^a ^{rag}, and bound up Emily's leg with ^{it}. No ^{more} ^{than} ^a ^{little} ^{skill}, though the tar of course was ^{of} ^{no} ^{use} ^{to} ^{her}. She had cried herself right out by the time he laid her in his bunk. When she opened her streaming eyes and saw him bending over her, nothing in his clumsy face but concern and an almost overpowering pity, she was so full of joy at being at last forgiven that she reached up her arms and kissed him. He sat down on the locker, rocking himself backwards and forwards gently. Emily

dozed for a few minutes: when she woke up he was still there.

'Tell me about when you were little,' she said.

Jonsen sat on, silent, trying to project his unwieldy mind back into the past.

'When I was a boy,' he said at last, 'it wasn't thought lucky to grease your own sea-boots. My Auntie used to grease mine before we went out with the lugger.'

He paused for some time.

'We divided the fish up into six shares—one for the boat, and one for each of us.'

That was all. But it was of the greatest interest to Emily, and she shortly fell asleep again, supremely happy.

So for several days the captain and mate had to share the latter's bunk, Box-and-Cox; Heaven knows what hole Margaret was banished to. The gash in Emily's leg was one which would take some time to heal. To make things worse, the weather became very unsteady: when she was awake she was all right, but if she fell asleep she began to roll about the bunk, and then, of course, the pain waked her again; which soon reduced her to a feverish and nervous condition, although the leg itself was going on as well as could be expected. The other children, of course, used to come and see her: but they did not enjoy it much, as there was nothing to do down in the cabin, once the novelty of admittance to the Holy Place had worn off. So their visits were perfunctory and short. They must have had a high old time at night, however, by themselves in the fore-hold now that the cat was away. They looked like it, too, in the mornings.

Otto used sometimes to come and teach her to make

fancy knots, and at the same time pour out his grievances against the captain: though these latter were always received with an uncomfortable silence. Otto was a Viennese by birth, but had stowed away in a Danube barge when he was ten years old, had taken to the sea, and thereafter generally served in English ships. The only place since his childhood where he had ever spent any considerable time on shore was Wales. For some years he had sailed coastwise from the once-promising harbour of Portdinlleyn, which is now practically dead: and so, as well as German, Spanish, and English, he could talk Welsh fluently. It was not a long residence, but at an impressionable age; and when he talked to Emily of his past it was mostly of his life as a 'boy' on the slate-boats. Captain Jonsen came of a Danish family settled on the Baltic coast, at Lubeck. He too had spent most of his time on English ships. How or when he and Otto had first met, or how they had drifted into the Cuban piracy business, Emily never discovered. They had plainly been inseparable for many years. She preferred letting them ramble on, to asking questions or trying to fit things together: she had that sort of mind.

When the knots palled, José sent her a beautiful crochet-hook he had carved out of a beef bone: and by pulling threads out of a piece of sail-cloth she was able to set to work to crochet doilies for the cabin table. But I am afraid that she also drew a lot, till the whole of the inside of the bunk was soon as thoroughly scribbled over as a palæolithic cave. What the captain would say when he found out was a consideration best postponed. The fun was to find knots, and unevennesses in the paint, that looked like something; and then with a

pencil to make them look more like it—putting an eye in the walrus, or supplying the rabbit with his missing ear. That is what artists call having a proper feeling for one's material.

Instead of getting better the weather got worse: and the universe soon became a very unstable place indeed: it became almost impossible to crochet. She had to cling onto the side of the bunk all the time, to prevent her leg getting banged.

It was in this inconvenient weather, however, that the pirates chose at last to make another capture. It turned out not a rich one: a small Dutch steamer, taking a consignment of performing animals to one of Mr. Barnum's predecessors. The captain of the steamer, who was conceited in a way that only certain Dutchman *can* be conceited, gave them a lot of trouble, in spite of the fact that he had practically nothing worth taking. He was a first-class sailor: but he was very fair, and had no neck. In the end they had to tie him up, bring him on board the schooner, and lay him on the cabin floor where Emily could keep an eye on him. He reeked of some particularly nauseous brand of cigars that made her head swim.

The other children had played quite an important part in the capture. They did far better as a badge of innocuousness than even the 'ladies'. The steamer (little more than dressed-up sailing-vessels they were then), thoroughly disgruntled at the weather, was wallowing about like a porpoise, her decks awash and her funnel over one ear, so to speak: so when a boat put out from the schooner, its departure cheered lustily by Edward, Harry, Rachel, and Laura, though his pride might resent it, the Dutchman never thought of suspecting

this presumable offer of assistance, and let them come on board.

It was then he began to give trouble, and they had to remove him onto the schooner. Their tempers were none too good on finding their booty was a lion, a tiger, two bears, and a lot of monkeys: so it is quite likely they were none too gentle with him in transit.

The next thing was to discover whether the *Thelma*, like the *Clorinda*, carried another, a secret cargo of greater value. They had imprisoned all the crew, now, aft: so one by one they were brought up on deck and questioned. But either there was no money on board, or the crew did not know of it, or would not tell. Most of them, indeed, appeared frightened enough to have sold their grandmothers: but some of them simply laughed at the pirates' bogy-bogy business, guessing they drew the line at murder in cold blood, sober.

What was done in each case was the same. When each man was finished with he was sent forward and shut in the fo'c'sle: and before bringing another up from aft one of the pirates would unmercifully belabour a roll of sail-cloth with a cat-o'-nine-tails while another yelled like the damned. Then a shot was fired in the air, and something thrown overboard to make a splash. All this, of course, was to impress those still down in the cabin awaiting their turns: and the pretence was quite as effective as the reality could have been. But it did no good, since probably there was no treasure to disclose.

There was, however, a plentiful supply of Dutch spirits and liqueurs on board: and these the pirates found a welcome change after so much West Indian rum.

After they had been drinking them for an hour or two Otto had a brilliant idea. Why not give the children

a circus? They had begged and begged to be taken onto the steamer to see the animals. Well, why not stage something really magnificent for them—a fight between the lion and the tiger, for instance?

No sooner said than done. The children, and every man who could be spared, came onto the steamer, and took up positions at safe heights in the rigging. The cargo-gaff was rigged, the hatch opened, and the two iron cages, with their stale cat-like reek, were hauled up on deck. Then the little Malay keepers, who kept twittering to each other in their windy tones, were made to open them, that the two monarchs of the jungle might come out and do battle.

How they were to be got in again was a question that never occurred to any one's consideration. Yet it is generally supposed to be easier to let tigers out of cages than to put them back.

In this case, however, even when the cages were open, neither of the beasts seemed very anxious to get out. They lay on the floor growling (or groaning) slightly, but making no move except to roll their eyes.

It was very unfortunate for poor Emily that she was missing all this, laid by the leg in Jonsen's stuffy cabin with the Dutch captain to guard.

When at first they had been left alone together he had tried to speak to her: but unlike so many Dutchmen he did not know a word of English. He could just move his head, and he kept turning his eyes first on a very sharp knife which some idiot had dropped in a corner of the cabin floor, then on Emily. He was asking her to get it for him, of course.

But Emily was terrified of him. There is something much more frightening about a man who is tied up

than a man who is not tied up—I suppose it is the fear he may get loose.

The feeling of not being able to get out of the bunk and escape added the true nightmare panic.

Remember that he had no neck, and the cigar-reek.

At last he must have caught the look of fear and disgust in her face, where he had expected compassion. He began to act for himself. First gently rocking his bound body from side to side, he set himself to roll.

Emily screamed for help, beating with her fist on the bunk: but none came. Even the sailors who were left on board were out of ear-shot: they were straining all their attention to see what was happening on the steamer that wallowed and heaved seventy yards away.

It was not surprising no one heard poor Emily, left alone in the cabin with the terrible Dutchman.

She screamed and screamed: but there was no awakening from *this* nightmare.

By now he had managed to roll himself, in spite of the motion of the vessel, almost within reach of the coveted knife. The veins on his forehead stood out with his exertion and the stricture of his bonds. His fingers were groping, behind his back, for the edge.

Emily, beside herself with terror, suddenly became possessed by the strength of despair. In spite of the agony it caused her leg she flung herself out of the bunk, and just managed to seize the knife before he could manœuvre his bound hands within reach of it.

In the course of the next five seconds she had slashed and jabbed at him in a dozen places: then, flinging the knife towards the door, somehow managed to struggle back into the bunk.

The Dutchman, bleeding rapidly, blinded with his

own blood, lay still and groaned. Emily, her own wound reopened, and overcome with pain and terror, fainted. The knife, flung wildly, missed its aim and clattered down the steps again onto the cabin floor: and the first witness of the scene was Margaret, who presently peered down from the deck above, her dulled eyes standing out from her small, skull-like face.

Sailors have keen noses. They smelt blood at once, and crowded round the companion-way: where Margaret still sat, as if numb, on the top step.

Emily lay in the bunk below, her eyes shut—conscious again, but her eyes shut.

The Dutch captain they could see on the floor, stretched in a pool of blood. '*But, Gentlemen, I have a wife and children!*' he suddenly said in Dutch, in a surprised and gentle tone: then died, not so much of any mortal wound as of the number of superficial gashes he had received.

It was plainly Margaret who had done it—killed a bound, defenceless man, for no reason at all; and now sat watching him die, with her dull, meaningless stare.

CHAPTER VIII

The contempt they already felt for Margaret, their complete lack of pity in her obvious illness and misery, had been in direct proportion to the childhood she had belied.

This crime would have seemed to them grave on the part of a grown man, in its unrelieved wantonness: but done by one of her years, and nurture, it was unspeakable. She was lifted by the arms from the stair where she still sat, and without a moment's hesitation (other than that resulting from too many helping hands) was dropped into the sea.

But yet the expression of her face, as—like the big white pig in the squall—she vanished to windward, left a picture in Otto's mind he never forgot. She was, after all, his affair.

The Dutchman's body was fetched up on deck. Captain Jonsen went below: and once bent over poor little Emily. She only screwed up her eyes tighter when she felt his hot breath on her face. She did not open them till everybody had quite gone—and shut them again when presently José came to swab the cabin floor.

The second boat, bringing back the rest of the crew and the four children, almost ran into Margaret before they saw her. She was swimming desperately, but in complete silence: her hair now plastered across her eyes and mouth, now floating out on the water as her head went under. They lifted her into the boat and set her in the stern-sheets with the other children. So it was they found themselves together again.

In her sopping condition, the others naturally gave her

elbow-room: but still, she was among them. They sat and stared at her, their eyes very wide and serious, but without speaking. Margaret, her teeth chattering with exhaustion, tried ineffectually to wring out the hem of her frock. She did not speak either: but nevertheless it was not long before both she and the other children felt a sort of thaw setting in between them.

As to the oarsmen, they never troubled their heads as to how she came in the water. They supposed she had accidentally slipped over the side: but were not particularly interested, especially as they had their work cut out manœuvring round to the schooner's lee and clambering on board. There was a tremendous pow-wow going on aft, so that no one noticed them arrive.

Once on board, Margaret went straight forward as of old, climbed down the ladder into the fore-hold and undressed, the other children watching her every movement with an unfeigned interest. Then she rolled herself in a blanket, and lay down.

They none of them noticed quite how it happened: but in less than half an hour they were all five absorbed in a game of Consequences. Presently one of the crew came, peered down the hatch and then shouted 'Yes!' to the rest, and then went away again. But they neither saw nor heard him.

From now on, however, the atmosphere of the schooner suffered a change. A murder is inclined to have this effect on a small community. As a matter of fact, the Dutch captain's was the first blood to be shed on board, in the course of business at any rate (I will not answer for private quarrels). The way it had been shed left the pirates profoundly shocked, their eyes opened to a depravity of human nature they had not dreamt of: but

also it gave them an uncomfortable feeling round the neck. So long as there was only the circus-prank to avenge, no American man-of-war was likely to be dispatched in their pursuit: high Naval Authorities shrink naturally from any contact with the ridiculous: but suppose the steamer put into port, and announced the forcible abduction of her captain? Or worse, suppose her mate, with an accursed spy-glass, had seen that captain's bloody body take its last dive? Pursuit would be only too likely.

The plea 'It was none of us men did this wicked deed, but one of our young female prisoners,' was hardly one which could be submitted to a jury.

Captain Jonsen had discovered from the steamer's log where he was: so he put the schooner about, and set a course for his refuge at Santa Lucia. It was unlikely, he thought, now, that any British man-of-war would still be cruising about the scene of the *Clorinda* episode—they had too much to do: and he had reasons (fairly expensive ones) for not anticipating any molestation from the Spanish authorities. He did not like going home with an empty ship, of course: but that appeared inevitable.

The outward sign of this change in the atmosphere of the schooner was a spontaneous increase in the strictness of discipline. Not a drop of rum was drunk. Watch was kept with the regularity of a line-of-battle-ship. The schooner became tidier, more seamanlike in every way.

Thunder was slain and eaten the next day, without any regard for the feelings of his lovers: indeed, all tenderness towards the children vanished. Even José ceased playing with them. They were treated with a detached severity not wholly divorced from fear—as if

these unfortunate men at last realized what diabolic yeast had been introduced into their lump.

So sensible were the children themselves of the change that they even forgot to mourn for Thunder—excepting Laura, whose face burned an angry red for half a day.

But the ship's monkey, on the other hand, with no pig now to tease, nearly died of ennui.

ii

The reopening of the wound in her leg made it several days more before Emily was fit to be moved from the cabin. During this time she was much alone. Jonsen and Otto seldom came below, and when they did were too preoccupied to heed her blandishing. She sang, and conversed to herself, almost incessantly; only interrupting herself to beseech these two, with a superfluity of endearments, to pick up her crochet-hook, to look at the animal she had built out of her blanket, to tell her a story, to tell her what naughty things they did when they were little—how unlike Emily it was, all this gross bidding for attention! But as a rule they went away again, or went to sleep, without taking the least notice of her.

As well, she told herself, *to* herself, endless stories: as many as there are in *The Arabian Nights*, and quite as involved. But the strings of words she used to utter aloud had nothing to do with this: I mean, that when she made a sort of narrative noise (which was often), she did it for the noise's sake: the silent, private formation of sentences and scenes, in one's head, is far preferable for real story-telling. If you had been watching her then, unseen, you could only have told she was doing it by the dramatic expressions of her face, and her restless

flexing and tossing—and if she had had the slightest inkling you were there, the audible rigmarole would have started again. (No one who has private thoughts going on loudly in his own head is quite sure of their not being overheard unless he is providing something else to occupy foreign ears.)

When she sang, however, it was always wordless: an endless succession of notes, like a bird's, fixed to the first vocable handy, and practically without tune. Not being musical, there was never any reason for her to stop: so one song would often go on for half an hour.

Although José had scrubbed the cabin floor as well as he could, a large stain still remained.

At times she let her mind wander about, quite peacefully, in her memories of Jamaica: a period which now seemed to her very remote, a golden age. How young she must have been! When her imagination grew tired, too, she could recall the Anansi stories Old Sam had told her: and they often proved the point of departure for new ones of her own.

Also she could remember the creepy things he had told her about duppies. *How* they used to tease the negroes about the supposed duppy at the bathing-hole, the duppy of the drowned man! It gave one an enormous sense of power, that—not to believe in duppies.

But she found herself taking much less pleasure in duppies now than she used.

She even once caught herself wondering what the Dutchman's duppy would look like, all bloody, with its head turned backwards on its shoulders and clanking a chain . . . it was a momentary flash, the way the banished image of Tabby had come back to her. For a moment her head reeled: in another she was far from Jamaica,

far from the schooner, far from duppies, on a golden throne in the remotest East.

The other children were no longer allowed in the cabin to visit her: but when she heard their feet scampering overhead, she often conversed with them in loud yells. One of these yells from above told her:

'Marghie's back, you know.'

'O-oh.'

After that Emily was silent for a bit, her beautiful, innocent grey eyes fixed on the ear of a dwarf at the end of her bunk. Only the slight pucker at the top of her nose showed with what intensity she was thinking: and the minute drops of sweat on her temples.

But it was not only when there was some outward occasion, like this, that she suffered acute distress.

Froth as she might, those times of consciousness, which had begun with a moment of such sublime vision, were both growing on her and losing their lustre. They were become sinister. Life threatened to be no longer an incessant, automatic discharge of energy: more and more often, and when least expected, all that would suddenly drop from her, and she would remember that she was *Emily*, who had killed . . . and who was *here* . . . and that Heaven alone knew what was going to happen to the incompetent little thing, by what miracle she was going to keep her end up. . . . Whenever this happened, her stomach seemed to drop away within her a hundred and fifty feet.

She, like Laura, had one foot each side of a threshold now. As a piece of Nature, she was practically invulnerable. But as *Emily*, she was absolutely naked, tender. It was particularly cruel that this transition should come when so fierce a blast was blowing.

For mark this: anyone in bed, with a blanket up to her chin, is in a measure safe. She might go through abysms of terror; but once these passed, no practical harm had been done. But once she was up and about? Suppose it was at some crisis, some call to action, that her Time came on her? What appalling blunder could she fail to make?

Oh why must she grow up? Why, for pity's sake?

Quite apart from these attacks of blind, secret panic, she had other times of an ordinary, very rational anxiety. She was ten and a half now. What sort of future lay before her, what career? (Their mother had implanted in them young, as a matter of principle, girls and boys alike, the idea that they would one day have to earn their own livings.) I say she was ten and a half: but it seemed such ages since she had come on the schooner that she thought she was probably older even than that.—Now this life was full of interest: but was it, she asked herself, a really useful education? What did it fit her for? Plainly, it taught her nothing but to be a sort of pirate too (what sort of a pirate, being a girl, was a problem in itself). But as time slipped by, it became clearer and clearer that every other life would be impossible for her—indeed, for all of them.

Gone, alas, was any shred of confidence that she was God. That particular, supreme career was closed to her. But the conviction that she was the wickedest person who had ever been born, this would not die for much longer. Some appalling Power had determined it: it was no good struggling against it. Had she not already committed the most awful of crimes . . . the most awful of crimes, though, that was not murder, that was the mysterious crime against the Holy Ghost, which dwarfed

even murder . . . had she, unwittingly, at some time committed this too? She so easily might have, since she did not know what it was. And if that were so, no wonder the pity of Heaven was sealed against her!

So the poor little outcast lay shivering and sweating under her blanket, her gentle eyes fixed on the ear of the dwarf she had drawn.

But presently she was singing again happily, and hanging right out of the bunk to outline in pencil the brown stain on the floor. A touch here, a touch there, and it was an old market-woman to the life, hobbling along with a bundle on her back! I admit that it staggered even Otto a bit when he came in later and saw what she had done.

But when again she lay still on her back, and contemplated the practical difficulties of the life ahead of her (even leaving God and her Soul and all that on one side), she had not the support of Edward's happy optimism: she was old enough to know how helpless she really was. How should she, dependent now for her very life on the kindness of those around her, how should she ever acquire the wit and strength to struggle against them and their kind?

She had developed by this time a rather curious feeling about Jonsen and Otto. In the first place, she had become very fond of them. Children, it is true, have a way of becoming more or less attached to any one they are in close contact with: but it was more than that, deeper. She was far fonder of them than she had ever been of her parents, for instance. They, for their part, showed every mild sign consonant with their natures of being fond of her: but how could she *know*? It would be so easy for adult things like them to dissemble to

her, she felt. Suppose they really intended to kill her: they could so easily hide it: they would behave with exactly this same kindness . . . I suppose this was the reflection of her own instinct for secretiveness?

When she heard the captain's step on the stairs, it might be that he was bringing her a plate of soup, or it might be that he had come to kill her—suddenly, with no warning change of expression on his amiable face even at the very end.

If that was his intention, there was nothing whatever she could do to hinder him. To scream, struggle, attempt flight—they would be absolutely useless, and—well, a breach of decorum. If he chose to keep up appearances, it behoved her to do so too. If he showed no sign of his intention, she must show no sign of her inkling of it.

That was why, when either of them came below, she would sing on, smile at him impishly and confidently, actually plague him for notice.

She was a little fonder of Jonsen than of Otto. Ordinarily, any coarseness or malformity of adult flesh is in the highest degree repulsive to a child: but the cracks and scars on Jonsen's enormous hands were as interesting to her as the valleys on the moon to a boy with a telescope. As he clumsily handled his parallel rulers and dividers, fitting them with infinite care to the marks on his chart, Emily would lie on her side and explore them, give them all names.

Why must she grow up? *Why* couldn't she leave her life always in other people's keeping, to order as if it was no concern of hers?

Most children have something of this feeling. With most children it is outweighed: still, they will generally hesitate before telling you they prefer to grow up. But

then, most children live secure lives, and have an at least apparently secure future to grow up to. To have already murdered a full-sized man, and to have to keep it for ever secret, is not a normal background for a child of ten: to have a Margaret one could not altogether banish from one's thoughts: to see every ordinary avenue of life locked against one, only a violent road, leading to Hell, open.

She was still on the border-line: so often Child still, and nothing but Child . . . it needed little conjuring . . . Anansi and the Blackbird, Genies and golden thrones . . .

Which is all a rather groping attempt to explain a curious fact: that Emily appeared—indeed *was* rather young for her age: and that this was due to, not in spite of, the adventures she had been through.

But this youngness, it burnt with an intenser flame. She had never yelled so loud at Ferndale, for sheer pleasure in her own voice, as now she yelled in the schooner's cabin, carolling like a larger, fiercer lark.

Neither Jonsen nor Otto were nervous men: but the din she made sometimes drove them almost distracted. It was very little use telling her to shut up: she only remembered for such a short time. In a minute she was whispering, in two she was talking, in five her voice was in full blast.

Jonsen was himself a man who seldom spoke to any one. His companionship with Otto, though devoted, was a singularly silent one. But when he did speak, he hated not to be able to make himself heard at all: even when, as was usual, it was himself he was talking to.

Otto was at the wheel (there was hardly one of the crew fit to steer). His lively mind was occupied with Santa Lucia, and his young lady there. Jonsen slipper-slopped up and down his side of the deck.

From below the skylight, too, came tears and cries for help that one might easily have taken for real if they had not been occasionally interrupted by such phrases as 'It's no good: I shall cut off your head just the same!'

Captain Jonsen was thinking about a little house in far-off, shadowy Lübeck—with a china stove . . . it didn't do to talk about retiring: above all, one must never say aloud 'This is my last voyage', even addressing oneself. The sea has an ironic way of interpreting it in her own fashion, if you do. Jonsen had seen too many skippers sail on their 'last voyage'—and never return.

He felt acutely melancholy, not very far from tears: and presently he went below. He wanted to be alone.

Emily by now was conducting, in her head, a secret conversation with John. She had never done so before: but to-day he had suddenly presented himself to her imagination. Of course his disappearance was strictly taboo between them: what they chiefly discussed was the building of a magnificent raft, to use in the bathing-hole at Ferndale; just as if they had never left the place.

When she heard the captain's step, so nearly surprising her at it, she blushed a deep red. She felt her cheeks still hot when he arrived. As usual, he did not even glance at her. He plumped down on a seat, put his elbows on the cabin table, his head in his hands, and rocked it rhythmically from side to side.

'Look, Captain!' she insisted. 'Do I look pretty like this? Look! *Look!* Look, *do* I look pretty like this?'

For once he raised his head, turned, and considered her at length. She had rolled up her eyes till only the whites showed, and turned her underlip inside out. With her first finger she was squashing her nose almost level with her cheeks.

'No,' he said simply, 'you do not.' Then he returned to his cogitation.

She stuck out her tongue as well, and wagged it.

'Look!' she went on, 'Look!'

But instead of looking at her, he let his eye wander round the cabin. It seemed changed somehow—emasculated: a little girl's bedroom, not a man's cabin. The actual physical changes were tiny: but to a meticulous man they glared. The whole place smelt of children.

Unable to contain himself, he crammed on his cap and burst up the stairs.

On deck, the others were romping round the binnacle, wildly excited.

'Damn!' cried Jonsen at the sight of them, stamping in an ungovernable rage.

Of course his slippers came off, and one of them skidded up the deck.

What devil entered into Edward I do not know: but the sight was too much for him. He seized the slipper and rushed off with it, shrieking with delight. Jonsen roared at him: he passed it to Laura, and was soon dancing up and down at the end of the jib-boom. Edward, of all people! The timid, respectful Edward!

Laura could hardly carry the enormous thing: but she clasped it tight in her arms, lowered her head, and with the purposeful air of a rugger-player ran back with it very fast up the deck, apparently straight into Jonsen's arms. At the last moment she dodged him

neatly: continued right on past Otto at the wheel, just as serious and just as fast, and forward again on the port-side. Jonsen, no quick mover at any time, stood in his socks and roared himself hoarse. Otto was shaking with laughter like a jelly.

This mad intoxication, which had flashed from child to child, now dropped a spark into the crew. They were already peering excitedly from the fo'c'sle hatch, grins struggling with outrage for pride of place: but at this point they broke into a cheer. Then, like the devils in a pantomime, they all sank together through the floor, aghast at themselves, and pulled the scuttle over their heads.

Laura, still hugging the slipper, caught her toe in an eye-bolt and fell full length, set up a yell.

Otto, with a suddenly straight face, ran forward, picked up the slipper and returned it to Jonsen, who put it on. Edward stopped jumping up and down and became frightened.

Jonsen was trembling with rage. He advanced on Edward with an iron belaying-pin in his hand.

'Come down from there!' he commanded.

'Don't! Don't! Don't!' cried Edward, not moving. Harry suddenly ran and hid himself in the galley, though he had had no part in it.

With a surprising agility which he rarely used, Jonsen started out along the bowsprit towards Edward, who did nothing but moan 'Don't!' at the sight of that murderous belaying-pin. When Jonsen was just on him, however, he swarmed up a stay, helping himself with the iron hanks of the jib.

Jonsen returned to the deck, wringing his hands and angrier than ever. He sent a sailor to the cross-trees to head the boy off and drive him down again.

Indeed, but for an extraordinary diversion, I shudder to think what might have happened to him. But just at this moment there appeared, up the ladder from the children's fore-hold, Rachel. She wore one of the sailor's shirts, back to front, and reaching to her heels: in her hand, a book. She was singing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' at the top of her voice. But as soon as she reached the deck she became silent: strutted straight aft, looking neither to right nor left, genuflected to Otto at the wheel, and then sat herself down on a wooden bucket.

Every one, Jonsen included, stood petrified. After a moment of silent prayer she arose, and commenced an inarticulate gabble-gabble which reproduced extraordinarily well the sound of what she used to hear in the little church at St. Anne's, where the whole family went one Sunday in each month.

Rachel's religious revival had begun. It could hardly have been more opportune: who shall say it was not Heaven which had chosen the moment for her?

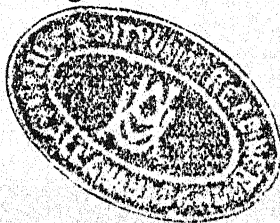
Otto, entering into the thing at once, rolled up his eyes and spread out his arms, cross-wise, against the wheel-house at his back.

Jonsen, rapidly recovering some of his temper, strode up to her. Her imitation was admirable. For a few moments he listened in silence. He wavered: should he laugh? Then what remained of his temper prevailed.

'Rachel!' he rebuked.

She continued, almost without taking breath, 'Gabble-gabble, Bretheren, gabble-gabble'.

'I am not a religious man myself,' said the captain, 'but I will not allow religion to be made a mock of on my ship!'



He caught hold of Rachel.

'Gabble-gabble!' she went on, slightly faster and on a higher note. 'Let me alone! Gabble-gabble! Amen! Gabble. . . .'

But he sat himself on the bucket, and stretched her over his knee.

'You're a wicked pirate! You'll go to Hell!' she shrieked, breaking at last into the articulate.

Then he began to smack her; so hard that she screamed almost as much with pain as with rage.

When at last he set her down, her face was swollen and purple. She directed a tornado of punches with her little fists against his knees, crying 'Hell! Hell! Hell!' in a strangled voice.

He flipped her fists aside with his hand, and presently she went away, so tired with crying she could hardly get her breath.

iv

When Emily returned to the fore-hold, her first act was one which greatly complicated life. As if there was not sea enough already outside the ship, she decreed that practically all the deck was sea also. The main-hatch was an island, of course; and there were others—chiefly natural excrescences of the same kind. But all the rest, all the open deck, could only be safely crossed in a boat, or swimming.

It was a source of consternation to the children that none of the grown-ups would recognize this 'sea'. The sailors trod carelessly on the deepest oceans, refusing so much as to paddle with their hands. But it was equally irritating to the sailors when the children, either safe on an island or bearing down in a vessel of their

own, would scream at them in a tone of complete conviction:

'You're drowning! You're drowning! O-o-oh, look out! You're out of your depth there! The sharks'll eat you!'

'O-oh look! Miguel's sinking! The waves are right over his head!'

That happens to be the one sort of joke sailors can't enjoy. Even though the words were unintelligible, their gist—eked out by the slightly malicious hints of the mate—was not. If they steadily refused to swim, they at least took to crossing themselves fervently and continuously whenever they had to traverse a piece of open deck. For there was no way one could be certain that these brats were not gifted with second sight—*hijos de puntas*!

What the children were really doing, of course, was trying out what it would feel like when they themselves were all grown pirates, running a joint venture or each with a craft of his own: and though they never so much as mentioned piracy in the course of these public navigations, they talked their heads off about it at night now.

Margaret also refused to swim: but they knew by now it was no good trying to make her: no good yelling at *her* she was drowning, for all she did at that word was to sit down and cry. So it became a recognized convention that Margaret, wherever she went or whatever she was doing, was on a raft, with a keg of biscuit and a barrel of water, by herself—and could be ignored.

For, since her return, she had become very dull company. That one game of Consequences had been a flash in the pan. For several days after it she had remained

in bed, hardly speaking, and inclined to tear strips off her blanket when she was asleep: and even when she was about again, though perfectly amiable—more amiable than before—she refused to join in any game whatever. She seemed happy: but for any imaginative purpose she was useless.

Moreover, she made no attempt to regain the sovereignty to which Emily had succeeded. She never ordered any one about. There was not even any fun to be got out of baiting her: nothing seemed to ruffle her temper. She was sometimes treated with a good-humoured contempt, sometimes ignored altogether: and it was enough for *her* to say something for it to be automatically voted silly.

v

Captain Jonsen called suddenly to José to take the wheel, and went below for his telescope. Then, buttressing his hip against the rail, and extending the shade over the object-glass, he stared fixedly at something almost in the eye of the setting sun. Emily, in a gentle mood, wandered up to him, and stood, her side just touching him. Then she began lightly rubbing her cheek on his coat, as a cat does.

Jonsen lowered the glass and tried his naked eye, as if he had more trust in it. Then he explored with the glass once more.

What was that business-like-looking sail, tall and narrow as a pillar? He swept his eye round the rest of the horizon: it was empty: only that single threatening finger, pointing upwards.

Jonsen had chosen his course with care to avoid all the ordinary tracks of shipping at that time of year.

Especially he had chosen it to avoid the routine-passages of the Jamaica Squadron from one British island to another. This—it had no business here: no more than he had himself.

Emily put her arm round his waist and gave it a slight hug.

‘What is it?’ she said. ‘Do let me look.’

Jonsen said nothing, continuing to stare with concentration.

‘Do let me look!’ said Emily. ‘I havn’t ever looked through a telescope, ever!’

Jonsen abruptly snapped the glass to, and looked down at her. His usually expressionless features were stirred from their roots. He lifted one hand and gently began to stroke her hair.

‘Do you love me?’ he asked.

‘Mm,’ assented Emily. Later she added, with a wriggle, ‘You’re a darling’.

‘If it was to help me, would you do something . . . very difficult?’

‘Yes, but *do* let me have a look through your telescope, because I haven’t, not ever, and I do so want to!’

Jonsen gave a weary sigh, and sat down on the cabin-top. What *on Earth* were children’s heads made of, inside?

‘Now listen,’ he said. ‘I want to talk to you seriously.’

‘Yes,’ said Emily, trying to hide her extreme discomfort. Her eye plaintively searched the deck for something to hold it. He pressed her against his knee in an attempt to win her attention.

‘If bad, cruel men came and wanted to kill me and take you away, what would you do?’

‘Oh, how horrid!’ said Emily. ‘Will they?’

‘Not if you help me.’

It was unbearable. With a sudden leap she was astride his knees, her arms round his neck and her hands pressing the back of his head.

‘I wonder if you make a good Cyclops?’ she said; and holding his head firmly laid her nose to his nose, her forehead to his forehead, both staring into each other’s eyes, an inch apart, till each saw the other’s face grow narrow and two eyes converge to one large, misty eye in the middle.

‘Lovely!’ said Emily. ‘You’re just right for one! Only now one of your eyes has got loose and is floating up above the other one!’

The sun touched the sea, and for thirty seconds every detail of the distant man-of-war was outlined in black against the flame. But, for the life of him, Jonsen could think of nothing but that house in quiet Lübeck, with the green porcelain stove.

CHAPTER IX

The darkness closed down with its sudden curtain on that minatory finger.

Captain Jonsen remained on deck all night, whether it was his watch or not. It was a hot night, even for those latitudes: and no moon. The suffused brilliance of the stars lit up everything close quite plainly, but showed nothing in the distance. The black masts towered up, clear against the jewellery, which seemed to swing slowly a little to one side, a little to the other, of their tapering points. The sails, the shadows in their curves all diffused away, seemed flat. The halyards and topping-lifts and braces showed here, were invisible there, with an arbitrariness which took from them all meaning as mechanism.

Looking forward with the glowing binnacle-light at one's back, the narrow milky deck sloped up to the fore-shortened tilt of the bowsprit, which seemed to be trying to point at a single enlarged star just above the horizon.

The schooner moved just enough for the sea to divide with a slight rustle on her stem, breaking out into a shower of sparks, which lit up also wherever the water rubbed the ship's side, as if the ocean were a tissue of sensitive nerves; and still twinkled behind in the mere paleness of the wake. Only a faint tang of tar in the nostrils was there to remind one that this was no ivory and ebony fantasia but a machine. For a schooner is in fact one of the most mechanically satisfactory, austere, unornamented engines ever invented by Man.

A few yards off, a shoal of luminous fish shone at different depths.

But a few hundred yards off, one could see nothing!

The sea became a steady glittering black that did not seem to move. Near, one could see so much detail it seemed impossible to believe that there a whole ship might lie invisible: impossible to believe that by no glass, no anxious straining of the eyes, could one ever *see*.

Jonsen strode up and down the lee-side of the vessel, so that what breeze there was, collecting in the hollow of the sails, overflowed down onto him in a continuous cool cascade. From time to time he climbed to the foremast-head, in spite of the fact that added height could not possibly give added vision: stared into the blank till his eyes ached, and then came down and resumed his restless pacing. A ship with her lights out might creep within a mile of him, and he not know it.

Jonsen was not given to intuitions: but he had now an extraordinary feeling of certainty that somewhere close in that cover of darkness his enemy lay, preparing destruction for him. He strained his ears too: but he could hear nothing either, except the rustle of the water, the occasional knocking of a loose block.

If only there had been a moon! He remembered another occasion, fifteen years before. The slaver of which he was then second mate was bowling along, the hatches down on her stinking cargo, all canvas spread, when right across the glittering path of the moon a frigate crossed, almost within gun-shot—crossed the light, and disappeared again. Jonsen had realized at once that though the frigate, with the light behind it, was now invisible to them, they, with the moonlight shining full on them, would be perfectly visible to the frigate. The boom of a gun soon proved it. He had wanted to make a blind bolt for it: but his captain, instead, ordered every stitch of sail to be furled: and so they lay all night under their

bare poles, not moving, of course, but (with nothing to reflect the light) grown invisible in their turn. When dawn came the frigate was so far down the wind they had easily shown her a clean pair of heels.

But to-night! There was no friendly moontrack to betray the attacker: nothing but this inner conviction, which grew every moment more certain.

Presently, looking down, he could just discern the small white figure on the deck which was Emily, hopping and skipping about. But it passed at once out of his mind.

Suddenly his tired eye caught a patch of something darker than the sea. He looked away, then back again, to make sure. It was still there: on the port bow: impossible to make out clearly, though . . . Jonsen slid down the shrouds in a flash, like a prentice. Landing on the deck like a thunderbolt, he nearly startled Emily out of her life: she had no idea he was up there. She startled him no less.

'It's so *hot* down there,' she began, 'I can't sleep——'

'Get below!' hissed Jonsen furiously: 'Don't you dare come up again! And don't let any of the others, till I tell you!'

Emily, thoroughly frightened, tumbled down the ladder as fast as she could, and rolled herself in her blanket from head to foot: partly because her bare legs were really a little chilled, but more for comfort. What had she done? What was happening? She was hardly down when feet were heard scurrying across the deck, and the hatches over her head were loosely fitted into place. The darkness was profound, and seemed to be rolling on her. No one was within reach: and she dared not move an inch. Every one was asleep.

Jonsen called all hands on deck: and in silence they mustered at the rail. The patch was clearly visible now: nearer, and smaller than he had thought at first. They listened for the splash of oars: but it came on in silence.

Suddenly they were upon it, it was grating against the ship's side, slipping astern. It was a dead tree, carried out to sea by some river in spate, and tangled up with weed.

But after that, he kept all hands on deck till dawn. In their new mood they obeyed him readily enough. For they knew he was not incompetent. He generally did the right thing—it was only the fuss he made in any emergency which gave him the appearance of blundering.

Yet, though there were now so many eyes watching, no further alarm was given.

But the moment the first paleness of dawn glimmered, every one's nerves tightened to cracking-point. The rapidly increasing light would any moment show them their fate.

It was not till full daylight, however, that Jonsen would let himself be convinced there was absolutely no man-of-war there.

As a matter of fact, its royals had sunk below the horizon less than an hour after he had first sighted it.

ii

But the alarm of that night caused Jonsen at last to make up his mind.

He altered his course: and as before he had designed it to avoid other shipping, now on the contrary it was calculated to run as soon as possible into the very track of the Eastward Bounders.

First, stages were rigged over the bows and stern, and

José and a paint-pot went over the rail to add *Lizzie Green* to the many names which from time to time had decorated the schooner's escutcheon. Not content with that, he had it painted on every other appropriate place—the boats, the buckets—it was as well to be thorough. Meanwhile, many of the sails were taken down and new ones bent—or rather, old ones, distinctive sails that a man would swear he couldn't have forgotten if he had ever seen them before. Otto sewed a large patch to the mainsail, where there was no hole. In his zeal Jonsen even considered lowering the yards and rigging her as a pure fore-and-after: but luckily for his sweating crew, abandoned the idea.

The master-stroke of his disguise was permanent—that he carried no guns. Guns can be hidden or thrown overboard, it is true: but the grooves they make in the deck cannot, as many a protesting-innocent sea-robber has found to his cost. Jonsen not only had no guns to hide, he had no grooves: any fool could see he had no guns, and never had had any. And who ever heard of a pirate without guns? It was laughable: yet he had proved again and again that one could make a capture just as easily without them: and further, that the captured merchantman, in making his report, could generally be counted on to imagine a greater or less display of artillery. Whether it was to save their faces, or pure conservatism—presumption that there must have been guns—nearly every vessel Jonsen had had dealings with had reported masked artillery, manned by 'fifty or seventy ruffians of the worst Spanish type'.

Of course if he met and was challenged by a man-of-war, he would have to give in without a fight. But then, it never pays to fight a man-of-war anyhow. If he

is a big one, he sinks you. If he is some little cock-shell of a cutter, commanded by a fire-eating young officer just into his teens, you sink him—and then there is the devil to pay. Better be sunk outright than insult the honour of a great nation in that fashion.

When he at last remembered to take the hatches off the children, they were half dead with suffocation. It was hot enough, stuffy enough anyhow down there, only the square opening above for ventilation; but with the hatches even loosely in place it was a Black Hole. Emily had at last dropped asleep, and slept late, through a chain of nightmares: when she did wake in the closed hold, she sat up, then fainted immediately, and fell back, her breath coming in loud snores. Before she came to again she was already sobbing miserably. At that the little ones began to cry too: which sound it was that reminded Jonsen, rather late, to take the hatches off.

He was quite alarmed when he saw them. It was not till they had been out in the morning freshness of the deck for some time that they even summoned up interest in the strange metamorphosis of the schooner that was in progress.

Jonsen looked at them with a troubled eye. They had not indeed the appearance of well-cared-for children: though he had not noticed this before. They were dirty to a fault: their clothes torn, and mended, if at all, with twine. Their hair was not only uncombed—there was tar in it. They were mostly thin, and a yellowy-brown colour. Only Rachel remained obstinately plump and pink. The scar on Emily's leg was still a blushing purple: and they all were blotched with insect bites.

Jonsen called José off his painting job: gave him a bucket of fresh water: the mate's (the only) comb: and

a pair of scissors. José wondered innocently: they did not look to him particularly dirty. But he did his duty, while they were still too sorry for themselves to object actively, to do anything more than sob weakly when he hurt them. Even when he had finished their toilet, of course, he had not reached the point at which a nurse-maid usually begins.

It was noon before the *Lizzie Green* looked herself-- whoever that might be: and a little after noon she was still heading for 'Philadelphia' when, hull down on the horizon, two sail were sighted, many miles apart, at about the same minute. Captain Jonsen considered them carefully; made his choice, and altered his course so as to fall in with her as soon as might be.

Meanwhile, the crew had no more doubt than Otto had of Jonsen's intention: and the sound of the whetstone floated merrily aft, till each man's knife had an edge that did its master's heart good. I have said that the murder of the Dutch captain had affected the whole character of their piracy. The yeast was working.

Presently the smoke of a large steamer cropped up over the horizon as well. Otto sniffed the breeze. It might hold, or it might not. They were still far from home, and these seas crowded. The whole enterprise looked to him pretty desperate.

Jonsen was at his usual shuffle-shuffle, nervously biting his nails. Suddenly he turned on Otto and called him below. He was plainly very agitated; his cheeks red, his eye wild. He began by plotting himself meticulously on the chart. Then he growled over his shoulder:

'Those children, they must go.'

'Aye,' said Otto. Then, as Jonsen said no more, he added: 'You'll land them at Santa, I take it?'

'No! They must go now. We may never get to Santa.'
Otto took a deep breath.

Jonsen turned on him, blustering:

'If we get taken with them, where'll *we* be, eh?'

Otto went white, then red, before he answered.

'You'll have to risk that,' he said slowly. 'You can't land them no other place.'

'Who said I was going to land them?'

'There's nothing else you can do,' said Otto stubbornly.

A light of comprehension dawned suddenly in Jonsen's worried face.

'We could sew them up in little bags,' he said with a genial smile, 'and put them over the side.'

Otto gave him one quick glance; what he saw was enough to relieve him.

'What are you going to do?' he asked.

'Sew them up in little bags! Sew them up in little bags!' Jonsen affirmed, rubbing his hands together and chuckling, all the latent sentimentality of the man getting the better of him. Then he pushed past Otto and went on deck.

The big brigantine, which he had aimed for at first, was proving a bit too far up the wind for him: so now he took the helm and let the schooner's head down a couple of points, to intercept the steamer instead.

Otto whistled. At last an inkling of what the captain was at had dawned on him.

iii

As they drew nearer, the children were all immensely interested: they had never before seen anything like this big, miraculous tub. The Dutch steamer, an old-

fashioned craft, had not differed very materially from a sailing-vessel: but this, in form, was already more like the steamers of our own day. Its funnel was still tall and narrow, with a kind of artichoke on top, it is true: but otherwise it was much the same as you and I are used to.

Jonsen spoke her urgently: and presently her engines stopped. The *Lizzie Green* slipped round under her lee. Jonsen had a boat lowered: then embarked in it himself. The children and the schooner's crew stood at the rail in tense excitement: watched a little ladder lowered from her towering iron side: watched Jonsen, alone, in his dark Sunday suit and the peaked cap of his rank, climb on board. He had timed it nicely: in another hour it would be dark.

He had no easy task. First he had his premeditated fiction to establish, his explanation of how he came by his passengers. Secondly, he had to persuade the captain of the steamship, a stranger, to relieve him, where he had so signally failed to persuade his friend the señora at Santa Lucia.

Otto was not a man to show agitation: but he felt it, none the less. This scheme of Jon's was the foolhardiest thing he had ever heard of: the slightest suspicion, and they were as good as done for.

Jonsen had ordered him, if he guessed anything was wrong, to run.

Meanwhile, the breeze was dropping, and it was still light.

Jonsen had vanished into the steamer as into a forest.

Emily was as excited as any of them, pointing out the novel features of this extraordinary vessel. The children still thought it was professional quarry. Edward was openly bragging of what he would do when he had captured it.

Jonsen had no easy task on the steamer: but Otto did not greatly relish his own. He did not know how to begin—and everything depended on his success.

‘See here,’ he burst out. ‘You’re going to England.’

Emily shot him a quick glance. ‘Yes?’ she said at last: her voice showing merely a polite interest.

‘The captain has gone onto that steamboat to arrange about it.’

‘Aren’t we staying with you any longer, then?’

‘No,’ said Otto: ‘you’re going home on that steamboat.’

‘Shan’t we see you any more, then?’ Emily pursued.

‘No,’ said Otto: ‘—Well, some day, perhaps.’

‘Are they all going, or only us two?’

‘Why, all of you, of course!’

‘Oh. I didn’t know.’

There was an awkward silence, while Otto wondered how to tackle the real problem.

‘Had we better go and get ready?’ asked Margaret.

‘Now listen!’ Otto interrupted her. ‘When you get on board, they’ll ask you all about everything. They’ll want to know how you got here.’

‘Are we to tell them?’

Otto was astonished she took his point so readily.

‘No,’ he said. ‘The captain and me don’t want you to. We want you to keep it a secret, do you see?’

‘What *are* we to say, then?’ Emily asked.

‘Tell them . . . you were captured by pirates, and then . . . they put you ashore at a little port in Cuba——’

‘And then we came along, and took you on board our schooner, which was going to America, to save you from the pirates.’

‘I see,’ said Emily.

'You'll say that, and keep the . . . other a secret?' Otto asked anxiously.

Emily gave him her peculiar, gentle stare.

'Of course!' she said.

Well, he had done his best: but Otto felt heavy at heart. That little cherub! He didn't believe she could keep a secret for ten seconds.

'Now: do you think you can make the little ones understand?'

'Oh yes, I'll tell them,' said Emily easily. She considered for a moment: 'I don't suppose they remember much anyway. Is that all?'

'That's all,' said Otto: and they walked away.

'What was he saying?' Margaret asked. 'What was it all about?'

'Oh shut up!' said Emily rudely. 'It's nothing to do with you!'

But inwardly she did not know whether she was on her head or her heels. Were they really going to let her escape? Weren't they just tantalizing her, meaning to stop her at the last moment? Were they handing her over to strangers, who had come to hang her for murder? Was her mother perhaps on that steamer, come to save her? But she loved Jonsen and Otto: how could she bear to part with them? The dear, familiar schooner. . . . All these thoughts in her head at once! But she dealt firmly enough with the Liddlies:

'Come on!' she said. 'We're going on that steamer.'

'Are *we* to do the fighting?' Edward asked, timorously enough.

'There isn't going to be any fighting,' said Emily.

'Will there be another circus?' asked Laura.

Then she told them they were to change ships again.

When Captain Jonsen came back, mopping the sweat from his polished forehead with a big cotton handkerchief, he seemed in a terrible hurry. As for the children, they were so excited they were ready to tumble into the boat: in such a flurry they nearly tumbled into the sea instead. *Now* they knew why they had been washed and combed.

It did not seem at first as if there was going to be any difficulty about getting them started. But it was Rachel who began the break-away.

'My babies! My babies!' she shrieked, and began running all over the ship, routing out bits of rag, fuzzy rope-ends, paint-pots . . . her arms were soon full.

'Here, you can't take all that junk!' dissuaded Otto.

'Oh but my darlings, I can't leave you behind!' cried Rachel piteously. Out rushed the cook, just in time to retrieve his ladle—and a battle-royal began.

Naturally, Jonsen was on tenterhooks to be gone. But it was essential they should part on good terms.

José was lifting Laura over the side.

'*Darling* José!' she burst out suddenly, and twined her arms tightly round his neck.

At that Harry and Edward, who were already in the boat, scrambled back on deck. They had forgotten to say good-bye. And so each child said good-bye to each pirate, kissing him and lavishing endearments on him.

'Go on! Go on!' muttered Jonsen impatiently.

Emily flung herself in his arms, sobbing as if her heart would break.

'Don't make me go!' she begged. 'Let me stay with you always, always!' She clung tight to the lapels of his coat, hiding her face in his chest: 'Oh, I *don't* want to go!'

Jonsen was strangely moved: for a moment, almost toyed with the idea.

But the others were already in the boat.

'Come on!' said Otto, 'or they'll go without you!'

'Wait! Wait!' shrieked Emily, and was over the side and in the boat in a flash.

Jonsen shook his head confusedly. For this last time, she had him puzzled.

But now, as they rowed across to the steamer, all the children stood up in the boat, in danger of tumbling out, and cried:

'Good-bye! Good-bye!'

'Adios!' cried the pirates, waving sentimental hands, and guffawing secretly to each other.

'C-c-come and see us in England!' came Edward's clear treble.

'Yes!' cried Emily. 'Come and stay with us! All of you!—*Promise* you'll come and stay with us!'

'All right!' shouted Otto. 'We'll come!'

'Come *soon*!'

'My babies!' wailed Rachel. 'I've lost 'most all my babies!'

But now they were alongside the steamer: and soon they were mounting a rope ladder to her deck.

What a long way up it was! But at last they were all on board.

The little boat returned to the schooner.

The children never once looked after it.

And well might they forget it. For exciting as it had been to go onto a ship of any kind for the first time, to find themselves on this steamer was infinitely more so. The luxury of it! The white paint! The doors! The

windows! The stairs! The brass!—A fairy palace, no: but a mundane wonder of a quite unimagined kind.

But they had little time now to take in the details. All the passengers, wild with curiosity, were gathered round them in a ring. As the dirty, dishevelled little mites were handed one by one on board, a gasp went up. The story of the capture of the *Clorinda* by as fiendish a set of buccaneers as any in the past that roamed the same Carribean was well known: and how the little innocents on board her had been taken and tortured to death before the eyes of the impotent captain. To see now face to face the victims of so foul a murder was for them too a thrill of the first water.

The tension was first broken by a beautiful young lady in a muslin dress. She sank on her knees beside little Harry, and folded him in her delicate arms.

‘The little angel!’ she murmured. ‘You poor little man, what horrors you have been through! How will you ever forget them?’

As if that were the signal, all the lady passengers fell on the astonished children and pitied them: while the men, less demonstrative, stood around with lumps in their throats.

Bewildered at first, it was not long before they rose to the occasion—as children generally will, when they find themselves the butt of indiscriminate adoration. Bless you, they were kings and queens! They were so sleepy they could hardly keep their eyes open: but they were not going to bed, not they! They had never been treated like this before. Heaven alone knew how long it would last. Best not waste a minute of it.

It was not long before they ceased even to be surprised,

became convinced that it was all their right and due. They were very important people—quite unique.

Only Emily stood apart, shy, answering questions uncomfortably. She did not seem to be able to throw herself into her importance with the same zest as the others.

Even the passengers' children joined in the fuss and admiration: perhaps realizing the opportunity which the excitement gave of avoiding their own bed-time. They began to bring (probably not without suggestion) their toys, as offerings to these new gods: and vied with each other in their generosity.

A shy little boy of about her own age, with brown eyes and a nice smile, his long hair brushed smooth as silk, his clothes neat and sweet-smelling, sidled up to Rachel.

'What's your name?' she asked him.

'Harold.'

She told him hers.

'How much do you weigh?' he asked her.

'I don't know.'

'You look rather heavy. May I see if I can lift you?'

'Yes.'

He clasped his arms round her stomach from behind, leant back, and staggered a few paces with her. Then he set her down, the friendship cemented.

Emily stood apart; and for some reason every one unconsciously respected her reserve. But suddenly something seemed to snap in her heart. She flung herself face-downwards on the deck—not crying, but kicking convulsively. It was a huge great stewardess who picked her up and carried her, still quivering from head to foot, down to a neat, clean cabin. There, soothing and talking to her without ceasing, she undressed her, and washed her with warm water, and put her to bed.

Emily's head felt different to any way it had ever felt before: hardly as if it were her own. It sang, and went round like a wheel, without so much as with your leave or by your leave. But her body, on the other hand, was more than usually sensitive, absorbing the tender, smooth coolness of the sheets, the softness of the mattress, as a thirsty horse sucks up water. Her limbs drank in comfort at every pore: it seemed as if she could never be sated with it. She felt physical peace soaking slowly through to her marrow: and when at last it got there, her head became more quiet and orderly too.

All this while she had hardly heard what was said to her: only a refrain that ran through it all made any impression, '*Those wicked men . . . men . . . nothing but men . . . those cruel men . . .*'

Men! It was perfectly true that for months and months she had seen nothing but men. To be at last back among other women was heavenly. When the kind stewardess bent over her to kiss her, she caught tight hold of her, and buried her face in the warm, soft, yielding flesh, as if to sink herself in it. Lord! How unlike the firm, muscular bodies of Jonsen and Otto!

When the stewardess stood up again, Emily feasted her eyes on her, eyes grown large and warm and mysterious. The woman's enormous swelling bosom fascinated her. Forlornly, she began to pinch her own thin little chest. Was it conceivable she would herself ever grow breasts like that—beautiful, mountainous breasts, that had to be cased in a sort of cornucopia? Or even firm little apples, like Margaret's?

Thank God she had not been born a boy! She was overtaken with a sudden revulsion against the whole sex of them. From the tips of her fingers to the tips of her

toes she felt female: one with that exasperating, idiotic secret communion: initiate of the γυναικεῖον.

Suddenly Emily reached up and caught the stewardess by the head, pulling it down to her close: began whispering earnestly in her ear.

On the woman's face the first look of incredulity changed to utter stupefaction, from stupefaction to determination.

'My eye!' she said at last. 'The cheek of the rascals! The impudence!'

Without another word she slipped out of the cabin. And you may imagine that the steamer captain, when he heard the trick that had been played upon him, was as astonished as she.

For a few moments after she had gone Emily lay staring at nothing, a very curious expression on her face indeed. Then, all of a sudden, she dropped asleep, breathing sweetly and easily.

But she only slept for about ten minutes: and when she woke the cabin door was open, and in it stood Rachel and her little boy friend.

'What do you want?' said Emily forbiddingly.

'Harold has brought his alligator,' said Rachel.

Harold stepped forward, and laid the little creature on Emily's coverlet. It was very small: only about six inches long: a yearling: but an exact miniature of its adult self, with the snub nose and round Socratic forehead that distinguish it from the crocodile. It moved jerkily, like a clockwork toy. Harold picked it up by the tail: it spread its paws in the air, and jerked from side to side, more like clockwork than ever. Then he set it down again, and it stood there, its tongueless mouth wide open and its harmless teeth looking like grains of sand-paper,

alternately barking and hissing. Harold let it snap at his finger—it was plainly hungry in the warmth down there. It darted its head so fast you could hardly see it move: but its bite was still so weak as to be painless, even to a child.

Emily drew a deep breath, fascinated.

‘May I have him for the night?’ she asked.

‘All right,’ said Harold: and he and Rachel were summoned away by some one without.

Emily was translated into Heaven. So this was an alligator! She was actually going to sleep with an alligator! She had thought that to any one who had once been in an earthquake nothing really exciting could happen again: but then, she had not thought of this.

There was once a girl called Emily, who slept with an alligator . . .

In search of greater warmth, the creature high-stepped warily up the bed towards her face. About six inches away it paused, and they looked each other in the eye, those two children.

The eye of an alligator is large, protruding, and of a brilliant yellow, with a slit pupil like a cat’s. A cat’s eye, to the casual observer, is expressionless: though with attention one can distinguish in it many changes of emotion. But the eye of an alligator is infinitely more stony and brilliant—reptilian.

What possible meaning could Emily find in such an eye? Yet she lay there, and stared, and stared: and the alligator stared too. If there had been an observer it might have given him a shiver to see them so—well, eye to eye like that.

Presently the beast opened his mouth and hissed

again gently. Emily lifted a finger and began to rub the corner of his jaw. The hiss changed to a sound almost like a purr. A thin, filmy lid first covered his eye from the front backwards, then the outer lid closed up from below.

Suddenly he opened his eyes again, and snapped on her finger: then turned and wormed his way into the neck of her night-gown, and crawled down inside, cool and rough against her skin, till he found a place to rest. It is surprising that she could stand it as she did, without flinching.

Alligators are utterly untameable.

iv

From the deck of the schooner, Jonsen and Otto watched the children climb onto the steamer: watched their boat return, and the steamer get under way.

So: it had all gone without a hitch. No one had suspected his story—a story so simple as to be very nearly the truth.

They were gone.

Jonsen could feel the difference at once: and it seemed almost as if the schooner could. A schooner, after all, is a place for *men*. He stretched himself, and took a deep breath, feeling that a cloying, enervating influence was lifted. José was industriously sweeping up some of Rachel's abandoned babies. He swept them into the leecuppers. He drew a bucket of water, and dashed it at them over the deck. The trap swung open—whew, it was gone, all that truck!

'Batten down that fore-hatch!' ordered Jonsen.

The men all seemed lighter of heart than they had been for many months: as if the weight they were relieved of had been enormous. They sang as they worked, and two friends playfully pummelled each other in passing—hard. The lean, masculine schooner shivered and plunged in the freshening evening breeze. A shower of spray for no particular reason suddenly burst over the bows, swept aft and dashed full in Jonsen's face. He shook his head like a wet dog, and grinned.

Rum appeared: and for the first time since the encounter with the Dutch steamer all the sailors got bestially drunk, and lay about the deck, and were sick in the scuppers. José was belching like a bassoon.

It was dark by then. The breeze dropped away again. The gaffs clanked aimlessly in the calm, with the motion of the sea: the empty sails flapped with reports like cannon, a hearty applause. Jonsen and Otto themselves remained sober, but they had not the heart to discipline the crew.

The steamer had long since disappeared into the dark. The foreboding which had oppressed Jonsen all the night before was gone. No intuition told him of Emily's whispering to the stewardess: of the steamer, shortly after, meeting with a British gunboat: of the long series of lights flickering between them. The gunboat, even now, was fast overhauling him: but no premonition disturbed his peace.

He was tired—as tired as a sailor ever lets himself be. The last twenty-four hours had been hard. He went below as soon as his watch was over, and climbed into his bunk.

But he did not, at once, sleep. He lay for a while conning over the step he had taken. It was really very astute. He had returned the children, undoubtedly safe

and sound: Marpole would be altogether discredited. Even to have landed them at Santa Lucia, his first intention, could never have closed the *Clorinda* episode so completely, since the world at large would not have heard of it: and it would have been difficult to produce them, should need arise.

Indeed, it had seemed to be a choice of evils: either he must carry them about always, as a proof that they were alive, or he must land them and lose control of them. In the first case, their presence would certainly connect him with the *Clorinda* piracy of which he might otherwise go unsuspected: in the second, he might be convicted of their murder if he could not produce them.

But this wonderful idea of his, now that he had carried it out successfully, solved both difficulties.

It had been a near thing with that little bitch Margaret, though . . . lucky the second boat had picked her up. . . .

The light from the cabin lamp shone into the bunk, illuminating part of the wall defaced with Emily's puerile drawings. As they caught his eye a frown gathered on his forehead: but as well a sudden twinge affected his heart. He remembered the way she had lain there, ill and helpless. He suddenly found himself remembering at least forty things about her—an overwhelming flood of memories.

The pencil she had used was still among the bedding, and his fingers happened on it. There were still some white spaces not drawn on.

Jonsen could only draw two things: ships, and naked women. He could draw any type of ship he liked, down to the least detail—any particular ship he sailed in, even. In the same way he could draw voluptuous, buxom women, also down to the least detail: in any

position, and from any point of view: from the front, from the back, from the side, from above, from below: his fore-shortening faultless. But set him to draw any third thing—even a woman with her clothes on—and he could not have produced a scribble that would have been recognizable.

He took the pencil: and before long there began to appear between Emily's crude uncertain lines round thighs, rounder bellies, high swelling bosoms, all somewhat in the manner of Rubens.

At the same time his mind was still occupied with reflections on his own astuteness. Yes, it had been a near thing with Margaret—it would have been awkward if, when he returned the party, there had been one missing.

A recollection descended on his mind like a cold douche, something he had completely forgotten about till then. His heart sank—as well it might:

'Hey!' he called to Otto on the deck above. 'What was the name of that boy who broke his neck at Santa? Jim—Sam—what was he called?'

Otto did not answer, except by a long-drawn-out whistle.

CHAPTER X

Emily grew quite a lot during the passage to England on the steamer: suddenly shot up, as children will at that age.

Most of the steamer children had made friends with the seamen, and loved to follow them about at their romantic occupations—swabbing decks, and so on. One day, one of these men actually went a short way up the rigging (what little there was), leaving a glow of admiration on the deck below. But all this had no glamour for the Thorntons. Edward and Harry liked best to peer in at the engines: but what Emily liked best was to walk up and down the deck with her arm round the waist of Miss Dawson, the beautiful young lady with the muslin dresses: or stand behind her while she did little water-colour compositions of toppling waves with wrecks foundering in them, or mounted dried tropical flowers in wreaths round photographs of her uncles and aunts. One day Miss Dawson took her down to her cabin and showed her all her clothes, every single item—it took hours. It was the opening of a new world to Emily.

The captain sent for Emily, and questioned her: but she added nothing to that first, crucial burst of confidence to the stewardess. She seemed struck dumb—with terror, or something: at least, he could get nothing out of her. So he wisely let her alone. She would probably tell her story in her own time: to her new friend, perhaps. But this she did not do. She would not talk about the schooner, or the pirates, or anything concerning them: what she wanted was to listen, to drink in all she could learn about England, where they were really going at last—that wonderfully exotic, romantic place.

Louisa Dawson was quite a wise young person for her years. She saw that Emily did not want to talk about the horrors she had been through: but considered it far better that she should be made to talk than that she should brood over them in secret. So when the days passed and no confidences came, she set herself to draw the child out. She had, as everybody has, a pretty clear idea in her own head of what life is like in a pirate vessel. That these little innocents should have come through it alive was miraculous, like the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace.

'Where used you to live when you were on the schooner?' she asked Emily one day suddenly.

'Oh, in the hold,' said Emily nonchalantly. 'Is that your Great-uncle *Vaughan*, did you say?'

In the hold. She might have known it. Chained, probably, down there in the darkness like blacks, with rats running over them, fed on bread and water.

'Were you very frightened when there was a battle going on? Did you hear them fighting over your head?'

Emily looked at her with her gentle stare: but kept silence.

Louisa Dawson was very wise in thus trying to ease the load on the child's mind. But also she was consumed with curiosity. It exasperated her that Emily would not talk.

There were two questions which she particularly wanted to ask. One, however, seemed insuperably difficult of approach. The other she could not contain.

'Listen, darling,' she said, wrapping her arms round Emily. 'Did you ever actually see any one killed?'

Emily stiffened palpably. 'Oh no,' she said. 'Why should we?'

'Didn't you ever even see a body?' she went on: 'A dead one?'

'No,' said Emily, 'there weren't any.' She seemed to meditate a while. 'There weren't many,' she corrected.

'You poor, poor little thing,' said Miss Dawson, stroking her forehead.

But though Emily was slow to talk, Edward was not. Suggestion was hardly necessary. He soon saw what he was expected to say. It was also what he wanted to say. All these rehearsals with Harry, these springings into the main rigging, these stormings of the galley . . . they had seemed real enough at the time. Now, he had soon no doubt about them at all. And Harry backed him up.

It was wonderful for Edward that every one seemed ready to believe what he said. Those who came to him for tales of bloodshed were not sent empty away.

Nor did Rachel contradict him. The pirates were wicked—deadly wicked, as she had good reason to know. So they had probably done all Edward said: probably when she was not looking.

Miss Dawson did not always press Emily like this: she had too much sense. She spent a good deal of her time simply in tying more firmly the knots of the child's passion for her.

She was ready enough to tell her about England. But how strange it seemed that these humdrum narrations should interest any one who had seen such romantic, terrible things as Emily had!

ii

When the steamer took in her pilot, you may imagine that her news travelled ashore; and also, that it quickly reached *The Times* newspaper.

Mr. and Mrs. Bas-Thornton, after the disaster, unable to bear Jamaica any longer, had sold Ferndale for a song and travelled straight back to England, where Mr. Thornton soon got posts as London dramatic critic to various Colonial newspapers, and manipulated rather remote influences at the Admiralty in the hope of getting a punitive expedition sent against the whole island of Cuba. It was thus *The Times* which, in its quiet way, broke the news to them, the very morning that the steamer docked at Tilbury. She was a long time doing it, owing to the fog, out of which the gigantic noises of dockland reverberated unintelligibly. Voices shouted things from the quays. Bells ting-a-linged. The children welded themselves into a compact mass facing outwards, an improvised Argus determined to miss nothing whatever. But they could not gather really what anything was about, much less everything.

Miss Dawson had taken charge of them all, meaning to convey them to her Aunt's London house till their relatives could be found. So now she took them ashore, and up to the train, into which they climbed.

'What are we getting into this box for?' asked Harry: 'Is it going to rain?'

It took Rachel several journeys up and down the steep steps to get all her babies inside.

The fog, which had met them at the mouth of the river, was growing thicker than ever. So they sat there in semi-darkness at first, till a man came and lit the light. It was not very comfortable, and horribly cold: but presently another man came, and put in a big flat thing which was hot: it was full of hot water, Miss Dawson said, and for you to put your feet on.

Even now she was in a train, Emily could hardly

believe it would ever start. She had become quite sure it was not going to when at last it did, jerking along like a cannon-ball would on a leash.

Then their powers of observation broke down. For the time they were full. So they played Up-Jenkins riotously all the way to London: and when they arrived hardly noticed it. They were quite loath to get out, and finally did so into as thick a pea-soup fog as London could produce at the tail end of the season. At this they began to wake up again, and jog themselves to remember that this really was *England*, so as not to miss things.

They had just realized that the train had run right inside a sort of enormous house, lit by haloed yellow lights and full of this extraordinary orange-coloured air, when Mrs. Thornton found them.

'Mother!' cried Emily. She had not known she could be so glad to see her. As for Mrs. Thornton, she was far beyond the bounds of hysteria. The little ones held back at first, but soon followed Emily's example, leaping on her and shouting: indeed it looked more like Actaeon with his hounds than a mother with her children: their monkey-like little hands tore her clothes in pieces, but she didn't care a hoot. As for their father, he had totally forgotten how much he disliked emotional scenes.

'I slept with an alligator!' Emily was shouting at intervals. 'Mother! I've slept with an alligator!'

Margaret stood in the background holding all their parcels. None of her relatives had appeared at the station. Mrs. Thornton's eye at last took her in.

'Why, Margaret . . .' she began vaguely.

Margaret smiled and came forward to kiss her.

'Get out!' cried Emily fiercely, punching her in the chest. 'She's *my* mother!'

'Get out!' shouted all the others. 'She's *our* mother!'

Margaret fell back again into the shadows: and Mrs. Thornton was too distracted to be as shocked as she would normally have been.

Mr. Thornton, however, was just sane enough to take in the situation. 'Come on, Margaret!' he said. 'Margaret's *my* pal! Let's go and look for a cab!'

He took the girl's arm, bowing his fine shoulders, and walked off with her up the platform.

They found a cab, and brought it to the scene, and they all got in, Mrs. Thornton just remembering to say 'How-d'you-do-good-bye' to Miss Dawson.

Packing themselves inside was difficult. It was in the middle of it all that Mrs. Thornton suddenly exclaimed:

'But where's John?'

The children fell immediately silent.

'Where is he?—Wasn't he on the train with you?'

'No,' said Emily, and went as dumb as the rest.

Mrs. Thornton looked from one of them to another.

'John! Where is John?' she asked the world at large, a faint hint of uneasiness beginning to tinge her voice.

It was then that Miss Dawson showed a puzzled face at the window.

'*John?*' she asked. 'Why, who is John?'

iii

The children passed the spring at the house their father had taken in Hammersmith Terrace, on the borders of Chiswick: but Captain Jonsen, Otto, and the crew passed it in Newgate.

They were taken there as soon as the gunboat which apprehended them reached the Thames.

The children's bewilderment lasted. London was not what they had expected, but it was even more astounding. From time to time, however, they would realize how this or that did chime in with something they had been told, though not at all with the idea the telling had conjured up. On these occasions they felt something as Saint Matthew must have felt when, after recounting some trivial incident, he adds: 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet So-and-So.'

All that spring they were an object of wonder to their acquaintances, as they had been on the steamer; and also an object of pity. In the wide world they had become almost national figures: but it was easier to hide this from them then than it would be nowadays. But people—friends—would often come and tell them about the pirates: what wicked men they were, and how cruelly they had maltreated them. Children would generally ask to see Emily's scar. They were especially sorry for Rachel and Laura, who, as being the youngest, must have suffered most. These people used also to tell them about John's heroism, and that he had died for his country just the same as if he had grown up and become a real soldier: that he had shown himself a true English gentleman, like the knights of old were and the martyrs. They were to grow up to be very proud of John, who though still a child had dared to defy these villains and die rather than allow anything to happen to his sisters.

The glorious deeds which Edward would occasionally confess to were still received with an admiration hardly at all tempered with incredulity. He had the intuition, by now, to make them always done in defiance of Jonsen and his crew, not, as formerly, in alliance with or superseding them.

The children listened to all they were told: and according to their ages believed it. Having as yet little sense of contradiction, they blended it quite easily in their minds with their own memories; or sometimes it even cast their memories out. Who were they, children, to know better what had happened to them than grown-ups.

Mrs. Thornton was a feeling, but an essentially Christian woman. The death of John was a blow to her from which she would never recover, as indeed the death of all of them had once been. But she taught the children in saying their prayers to thank God for John's noble end and let it always be an example to them: and then she taught them to ask God to forgive the pirates for all their cruelty to them. She explained to them that God could only do this when they had been properly punished on earth. The only one who could not understand this at all was Laura—she was, after all, rather young. She used the same form of words as the others, yet contrived to imagine that she was praying to the pirates, not for them; so that it gradually came about that whenever God was mentioned in her hearing the face she imagined for Him was Captain Jonsen's.

Once more a phase of their lives was receding into the past, and crystallizing into myth.

Emily was too old to say her prayers aloud, so no one could know whether she put in the same phrase as the others about the pirates or not. No one, in point of fact, knew much what Emily was thinking about anything, at that time.

iv

One day a cab came for the whole family, and they drove together right into London. The cab took them into the Temple: and then they had to walk through twisting passages and up some stairs.

Soon some more people arrived. They were Margaret and Harry, with a small, yellow, fanatical-looking aunt. The two lots of children had not seen each other for a long time: so they only said Hallo to each other very perfunctorily. Mr. Mathias, their host, was just as kind to the new arrivals.

Every one was at great pains to make the visit appear a casual one; but the children all knew more or less that it was nothing of the sort, that something was presently going to happen. However, they could play-act too. Rachel climbed onto Mr. Mathias's knee. They all gathered round the fire, Emily sitting bolt upright on a foot-stool, Edward and Laura side by side in a capacious arm-chair.

In the middle of every one talking there was a pause, and Mr. Thornton, turning to Emily, said, 'Why don't you tell Mr. Mathias about your adventures?'

'Oh yes!' said Mr. Mathias, 'do tell me all about it. Let me see, you're . . .'

'Emily,' whispered Mr. Thornton.

'Age?'

'Ten.'

Mr. Mathias reached for a piece of clean paper and a pen.

'What adventures?' asked Emily clearly.

'Well,' said Mr. Mathias, 'you started for England on a sailing-ship, didn't you? The *Clorinda*?'

'Yes. She was a barque.'

'And then what happened?'

She paused before answering.

'There was a monkey,' she said judicially.

'A monkey?'

'And a lot of turtles,' put in Rachel.

'Tell him about the pirates,' prompted Mrs. Thornton. Mr. Mathias frowned at her slightly: 'Let her tell it in her own words, please.'

'Oh yes,' said Emily dully, 'we were captured by pirates of course.'

Both Edward and Laura had sat up at the word, stiff as spokes.

'Weren't you with them too, Miss Fernandez?' Mr. Mathias asked.

Miss Fernandez! Every one turned to see who he could mean. He was looking at Margaret.

'Me?' she said suddenly, as if waking up.

'Yes, you! Go on!' said her aunt.

'Say yes,' prompted Edward. 'You were with us, weren't you?'

'Yes,' said Margaret, smiling.

'Then why couldn't you say so?' hectored Edward.

Mr. Mathias silently noted this curious treatment of the eldest: and Mrs. Thornton told Edward he musn't speak like that.

'Tell us what you remember about the capture, will you?' he asked, still of Margaret.

'The what?'

'Of how the pirates captured the *Clorinda*.'

She looked round nervously and laughed, but said nothing.

'The monkey was in the rigging, so they just came on the ship,' Rachel volunteered.

'Did they—er—fight with the sailors? Did you see them hit anybody? Or threaten anybody?'

'Yes!' cried Edward, and jumped up from his chair, his eyes wide and inspired. '*Bing! Bang! Bong!*' he declared, thumping the seat at each word; then sat down again.

'They didn't,' said Emily. 'Don't be silly, Edward.'

'Bing, bang, bong,' he repeated, with less conviction.

'*Bung!*' contributed Harry to his support, from under the arm of the fanatical aunt.

'Bim-bam; bim-bam,' sing-songed Laura, suddenly waking up and starting a tattoo of her own.

'Shut up!' cried Mr. Thornton. 'Did you, or did you not, any of you, see them hit anybody?'

'Cut off their heads!' cried Edward. 'And throw them in the sea!—Far, far . . .' his eyes became dreamy and sad.

'They didn't hit anybody,' said Emily. 'There wasn't any one to hit.'

'Then where were all the sailors?' asked Mr. Mathias.

'They were all up the rigging,' said Emily.

'I see,' said Mr. Mathias. 'Er—didn't you say the monkey was in the rigging?'

'He broke his neck,' said Rachel. She wrinkled up her nose disgustingly: 'He was drunk'.

'His tail was rotted,' explained Harry.

'Well,' said Mr. Mathias, 'when they came on board, what did they do?'

There was a general silence.

'Come, come! What did they do?—What did they do, Miss Fernandez?'

'I don't know.'

'Emily?'

'I don't know.'

He sat back in despair: 'But you saw them!'

'No we didn't,' said Emily, 'we went in the deck-house.'

'And stayed there?'

'We couldn't open the door.'

'*Bang-bang-bang!*' Laura suddenly rapped out.

'Shut up!'

'And then, when they let you out?'

'We went on the schooner.'

'Were you frightened?'

'What of?'

'Well: them.'

'Who?'

'The pirates.'

'Why should we?'

'They didn't do anything to ~~frighten~~ you?'

'To *frighten* us?'

'Coo! José did belch!' Edward interjected merrily, and began giving an imitation. Mrs. Thornton chid him.

'Now,' said Mr. Mathias gravely, 'there's something I want you to tell me, Emily. When you were with the pirates, did they ever do anything you didn't like? You know what I mean, something *nasty*?'

'Yes!' cried Rachel, and every one turned to her. 'He talked about drawers,' she said in a shocked voice.

'What did he say?'

'He told us once not to toboggan down the deck on them,' put in Emily uncomfortably.

'Was that all?'

'He shouldn't have talked about drawers,' said Rachel.

'Don't *you* talk about them, then,' cried Edward: 'Smarty!'

'Miss Fernandez,' said the lawyer diffidently, 'have you anything to add to that?'

'What?'

'Well . . . what we are talking about.'

She looked from one person to another, but said nothing.

'I don't want to press you for details,' he said gently, 'but did they ever—well, make suggestions to you?'

Emily fixed her glowing eyes on Margaret, catching hers.

'It's no good questioning Margaret,' said the aunt morosely; 'but it ought to be perfectly clear to you what has happened.'

'Then I am afraid I must,' said Mr. Mathias. 'Another time, perhaps.'

Mrs. Thornton had for some while been frowning and pursing her lips to stop him.

'Another time would be much better,' she said: and Mr. Mathias turned the examination back to the capture of the *Clorinda*.

But they seemed to have been strangely unobservant of what went on around them, he found.

v

When the others had all gone, Mathias offered Thornton, whom he liked, a cigar: and the two sat together for a while over the fire.

'Well,' said Thornton, 'did the interview go as you had expected?'

'Pretty much.'

'I noticed you questioned them chiefly about the *Clorinda*. But you have got all the information you need on that score, surely?'

'Naturally I did. Anything they affirmed I could check exactly by Marpole's detailed affidavit. I wanted to test their reliability.'

'And you found?'

'What I have always known. That I would rather have to extract information from the devil himself than from a child.'

'But what information, exactly, do you want?'

'Everything. The whole story.'

'You know it.'

Mathias spoke with a dash of exasperation:

'Do you realize, Thornton, that without considerable help from them we may even fail to get a conviction?'

'What is the difficulty?' asked Thornton in a peculiar, restrained tone.

'We could get a conviction for piracy, of course. But since '37, piracy has ceased to be a hanging offence unless it is accompanied by murder.'

'And is the killing of one small boy insufficient to count as murder?' asked Thornton in the same cold voice.

Mathias looked at him curiously.

'We can guess at the probabilities of what happened,' he said. 'The boy was undoubtedly taken onto the schooner; and now he can't be found. But, strictly speaking, we have no proof that he is dead.'

'He may, of course, have swum across the Gulf of Mexico and landed at New Orleans.'

Thornton's cigar, as he finished speaking, snapped in two.

'I know this is . . .' began Mathias with professional

gentleness, then had the sense to check himself. 'I am afraid there is no doubt that we can personally entertain that the lad is dead: but there is a legal doubt: and where there is a legal doubt a jury might well refuse to convict.'

'Unless they were carried away by an attack of common sense.'

Mathias paused for a moment before asking:

'And the other children have dropped, as yet, no hint as to what precisely did happen to him?'

'None.'

'Their mother has questioned them?'

'Exhaustively.'

'Yet they must surely know.'

'It is a great pity,' said Thornton, deliberately, 'that when the pirates decided to kill the child, they did not invite in his sisters to watch.'

'Well, is it your impression that they do truly know nothing, or that they have been terrorized into hiding something?'

Thornton gave a gentle sigh, almost of relief.

'No,' he said, 'I don't think they have been terrorized. But I do think they may know something they won't tell.'

'But why?'

'Because, during the time they were on the schooner, it is plain they got very fond of this man Jonsen, and of his lieutenant, the man called Otto.'

Mathias was incredulous.

'Is it possible for children to be mistaken in a man's whole nature like that?'

The look of irony on Thornton's face attained an intensity that was almost diabolical.

'I think it is possible,' he said, 'even for children to make such a mistake.'

'But this . . . affection: it is highly improbable.'

'It is a fact.'

Mathias shrugged. After all, a criminal lawyer is not concerned with facts. He is concerned with probabilities.

'I think I shall call your Emily.'

Thornton stood up.

'Well,' he said, 'you'll have to settle with her yourself what she's to say. Write it out, and make her learn it by heart.'

'Certainly,' said Mathias, looking at his finger-nails. 'I am not in the habit of going into court unprepared.—It's bad enough having a child in the box anyway,' he went on.

Thornton paused at the door.

'—You can never count on them. They say what they think you want them to say. And then they say what they think the opposing counsel wants them to say too—if they like his face.'

Thornton gesticulated—a foreign habit.

'I think I will take her to Madame Tussaud's on Thursday afternoon and try my luck,' ended Mathias: and the two bade each other good-bye.

vi

Emily enjoyed the wax-works; even though she did not know that a wax-work of Captain Jonsen, his scowling face bloody and a knife in his hand, was already in contemplation. She got on well with Mr. Mathias. She felt very grown-up, going out at last without the little ones endlessly tagging. Afterwards he took her to a bunshop in Baker Street, and tried to persuade her to pour out his tea for him: but she turned shy at that, and he had in the end to do it for himself.

Mr. Mathias, like Miss Dawson, spent a good deal of his time and energy in courting the child's liking. He was at least sufficiently successful for it to come as a complete surprise to her when presently he began to throw out questions about the death of Captain Vandervoort. Their studied casualness did not deceive her for a moment. He learnt nothing: but she was hardly home, and his carriage departed, than she was violently sick. Presumably she had eaten too many cream buns. But, as she lay in bed sipping from a tumbler of water in that mood of fatalism which follows on the heels of vomiting, Emily had a lot to think over, as well as an opportunity of doing so without emotion.

Her father was spending a rare evening at home: and now he stood unseen in the shadows of her bedroom, watching her. To his fantastic mind, the little chit seemed the stage of a great tragedy: and while his bowels of compassion yearned towards the child of his loins, his intellect was delighted at the beautiful, the subtle combination of the contending forces which he read into the situation. He was like a powerless stalled audience, which pities unbearably, but would not on any account have missed the play.

But as he stood now watching her, his sensitive eyes communicated to him an emotion which was not pity and was not delight: he realized, with a sudden painful shock, that he was afraid of her!

But surely it was some trick of the candle-light, or of her indisposition, that gave her face momentarily that inhuman, stony, basilisk look?

Just as he was tiptoeing from the room, she burst out into a sudden, despairing moan, and leaning half out of her bed began again an ineffectual, painful retching.

Thornton persuaded her to drink off her tumbler of water, and then held her hot moist temples between his hands till at last she sank back, exhausted, in a complete passivity, and slipped off to sleep.

There were several occasions after this when Mr. Mathias took her out on excursions, or simply came and examined her at the house. But still he learnt nothing.

Once more they drove into town: but this time it was to the Central Criminal Court. The crowd outside was enormous, and Emily was bundled in with the greatest rapidity. The building was impressive, and full of policemen, and the longer she had to wait in the little room where they were shown, the more nervous she became. Would she remember her piece, or would she forget it? From time to time echoing voices sounded down the corridors, summoning this person or that. Her mother stayed with her, but her father only looked in occasionally, when he would give some news to her mother in a low tone. Emily had her catechism with her, and read it over and over.

Finally, a policeman came, and conducted them into the court.

A criminal court is a very curious place. The seat of a ritual quite as elaborate as any religious one, it lacks in itself any impressiveness or symbolism of architecture. A robed judge in court looks like a Catholic bishop would if he were to celebrate Mass in some municipal bath-house. There is nothing to make one aware that here the Real Presence is: the presence of death.

As Emily came into court, past the many men in black gowns writing with their quill pens, she did not at

first see judge, jury, or prisoners. Her eye was caught by the face of the Clerk, where he sat below the Bench. It was an old and very beautiful face, cultured, unearthly refined. His head laid back, his mouth slightly open, his eyes closed, he was gently sleeping.

That face remained etched on her mind as she was shown her way into the box. The Oath, which formed the opening passages of her catechism, was administered; and with its familiar phrases her nervousness vanished, and with complete confidence she sang out her responses to the familiar questions which Mr. Mathias, in fancy dress, was putting to her. But until he had finished she kept her eyes fixed on the rail in front of her, for fear something should confuse her. At last, however, Mr. Mathias sat down; and Emily began to look around her. High above the sleeping man sat another, with a face even more refined, but wide awake. His voice, when now he spoke a few words to her, was the kindest she had ever heard. Dressed in his strange disguise, toying with a pretty nosegay, he looked like some benign old wizard who spent his magic in doing good.

Beneath her was the table where so many other wigged men were sitting. One was drawing funny faces: but his own was grave. Two more were whispering together.

Now another man was on his feet. He was shorter than Mr. Mathias, and older, and in no way good-looking or even interesting. He in turn began to ask her questions.

He, Watkin, the defending counsel, was no fool. He had not failed to notice that, among all the questions Mathias had put to her, there had been no reference to the death of Captain Vandervoort. That must mean that either the child knew nothing of it—itsself a valuable

lacuna in the evidence to establish, or that what she did know was somehow in his clients' favour. Up till now he had meant to pursue the obvious tactics—question her on the evidence she had already given, perhaps frighten her, at any rate confuse her and make her contradict herself. But any one, even a jury, could see through that. Nor was there any hope, under any circumstances, of a total acquittal: the most he could hope for was escape from the murder charge.

He suddenly decided to change his whole policy. When he spoke, his voice too was kind (though it lacked perforce the full benign timbre of the judge's). He made no attempt to confuse her. By his sympathy with her, he hoped for the sympathy, himself, of the court.

His first few questions were of a general nature: and he continued them until her answers were given with complete confidence.

'Now, my dear young lady,' he said at last. 'There is just one more question I want to ask you: and please answer it loudly and clearly, so that we can all hear. We have been told about the Dutch steamer, which had the animals on board. Now a very horrible thing has been suggested. It has been said that a man was taken off the steamer, the captain of it in fact, onto the schooner, and that he was murdered there. Now what I want to ask you is this. Did you see any such thing happen?'

Those who were watching the self-contained Emily saw her turn very white and begin to tremble. Suddenly she gave a shriek: then after a second's pause she began to sob. Every one listened in an icy stillness, their hearts in their mouths. Through her tears they heard, they all heard, the words: ' . . . He was all lying in his blood . . .

he was awful! He . . . he died, he said something and then he *died!*'

That was all that was articulate. Watkin sat down, thunderstruck. The effect on the court could hardly have been greater. As for Mathias, he did not show surprise: he looked more like a man who has dug a pit into which his enemy has fallen.

The judge leant forward and tried to question her: but she only sobbed and screamed. He tried to soothe her: but by now she had become too hysterical for that. She had already, however, said quite enough for the matter in hand: and they let her father come forward and lift her out of the box.

As he stepped down with her she caught sight for the first time of Jonsen and the crew, huddled up together in a sort of pen. But they were much thinner than the last time she had seen them. The terrible look on Jonsen's face as his eye met hers, what was it that it reminded her of?

Her father hurried her home. As soon as she was in the cab she became herself again with a surprising rapidity. She began to talk about all she had seen, just as if it had been a party: the man asleep, and the man drawing funny faces, and the man with the bunch of flowers, and had she said her piece properly?

'Captain was there,' she said. 'Did you see him?'

'What was it all about?' she asked presently. 'Why did I have to learn all those questions?'

Mr. Thornton made no attempt to answer her questions: he even shrank back, physically, from touching his child Emily. His mind reeled with the many possibilities. Was it conceivable she was such an idiot as really not to know what it was all about? Could she

possibly not know what she had done? He stole a look at her innocent little face, even the tear-stains now gone. What was he to think?

But as if she read his thoughts, he saw a faint cloud gather.

'What are they going to do to Captain?' she asked, a faint hint of anxiety in her voice.

Still he made no answer. In Emily's head the Captain's face, as she had last seen it . . . what was it she was trying to remember?

Suddenly she burst out:

'Father, *what* happened to Tabby in the end, that dreadful windy night in Jamaica?'

vii

Trials are quickly over, once they begin. It was no time before the judge had condemned these prisoners to death and was trying some one else with the same concentrated, benevolent individual attention.

Afterwards, a few of the crew were reprieved and transported.

The night before the execution, Jonsen managed to cut his throat: but they found out in time to bandage him up. He was unconscious by the morning, and had to be carried to the gallows in a chair: indeed, he was finally hanged in it. Otto bent over once and kissed his forehead; but he was completely insensible.

It was the negro cook, however, according to the account in *The Times*, who figured most prominently. He showed no fear of death himself, and tried to comfort the others.

'We have all come here to die,' he said. '*That*' (point-

*A faultless dinner
ends with*

DE RESZKE

The Aristocrat of Cigarettes

American - 25 for 1/10
American de Luxe 25 for 2/-
De Reszke Virginias 20 for 1/-

Tenor (Turkish) 25 for 3/2
Egyptian Blend 20 for 2/-
De Reszke Turks 20 for 1/-

J. MILLHOFF & CO. LTD., 86 PICCADILLY, W.1

Modern First Editions

We are prepared to buy, at the prices indicated, fine copies of the following first editions:

Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, £25; The Dynasts, £14; Tomlinson, Sea and Jungle, £14; Galsworthy, Man of Property, £50; Douglas, South Wind, £10; McFee, Letters of an Ocean Tramp, £6; Shaw, Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant, £50; Butler, Way of all Flesh, £12; Bennett, Old Wives' Tale, £20; Kipling, First and Second Jungle Book, £30; Barrie, Little Minister, £40. We offer very high prices for any books by Galsworthy published under the name Sinjohn, and his Forsyte Saga, large or small paper editions. Please offer us all first editions of Shaw, Galsworthy, Kipling, Hardy, Douglas, De La Mare, Conrad, Barrie, McFee, Wilde, Hudson, Montague, Sassoon, Herman Melville, A. E. Housman, Beer-bohm, Lawrence, and James Stephens.

DAVIS & ORIOLI
30 MUSEUM STREET
LONDON, W.C.1

B O O K S

EXHIBITIONS OF
FINE PRINTING

During the summer Messrs. John and Edward Bumpus Ltd., Booksellers to the King, will be giving exhibitions of the work of famous presses. Catalogues of these exhibitions are generally printed by the presses themselves, and may be had on request. The address is 350 Oxford Street, W.1., and the telephone number is Mayfair 1223. These exhibitions will contain some of the finest books that have ever been printed.

B U M P U S

ing to the gallows) 'was not built for nothing. We shall certainly end our lives in this place: nothing can now save us. But in a few years we should die in any case. In a few years the judge who condemned us, all men now living, will be dead. *You* know that I die innocent anything I have done, I was forced to do by the rest of you. But I am not sorry. I would rather die now, innocent, than in a few years perhaps guilty of some great sin.'

viii

It was a few days later that term began, and Mr. and Mrs. Thornton took Emily to her new school at Blackheath. While they remained to tea with the head mistress, Emily was introduced to her new playmates.

'Poor little thing,' said the mistress, 'I hope she will soon forget the terrible things she has been through. I think our girls will have an especially kind corner in their hearts for her.'

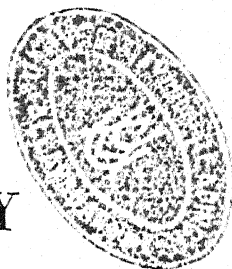
In another room, Emily with the other new girls was making friends with the older pupils. Looking at that gentle, happy throng of clean innocent faces and soft graceful limbs, listening to the ceaseless, artless babble of chatter rising, perhaps God could have picked out from among them which was Emily: but I am sure that I could not.

FINIS

LIFE AND LETTERS

VIRGINIA WOOLF

DR. BURNEY'S EVENING PARTY



I

The party was given either in 1777 or in 1778; on which day or month of the year is not known, but the night was cold. Fanny Burney, from whom we get much of our information, was accordingly either twenty-five or twenty-six, as we choose. But in order to enjoy the party to the full it is necessary to go back some years and to scrape acquaintance with the guests.

Fanny, from the earliest days, had always been fond of writing. There was a cabin at the end of her step-mother's garden at King's Lynn, where she used to sit and write of an afternoon till the oaths of the seamen sailing up and down the river drove her in. But it was only in the afternoon and in remote places that her half-suppressed, uneasy passion for writing had its way. Writing was held to be slightly ridiculous in a girl; rather unseemly in a woman. Besides, one never knew, if a girl kept a diary, whether she might not say something indiscreet—so Miss Dolly Young warned her; and Miss Dolly Young, though exceedingly plain, was

esteemed a woman of the highest character in King's Lynn. Fanny's stepmother also disapproved of writing. Yet so keen was the joy—'I cannot express the pleasure I have in writing down my thoughts at the very moment, and my opinion of people when I first see them', she wrote—that scribble she must. Loose sheets of paper fell from her pocket and were picked up and read by her father to her agony and shame; once she was forced to make a bonfire of all her papers in the back garden. At last some kind of compromise seems to have been arrived at. The morning was sacred to serious tasks like sewing; it was only in the afternoon that she allowed herself to scribble—letters, diaries, stories, verses in the look-out place which overhung the river, till the oaths of the sailors drove her in.

There was something strange in that, perhaps, for the eighteenth century was the age of oaths. Fanny's early diary is larded with them. 'God help me.' 'Split me.' 'Stap my vitals', together with damns and devilishes dropped daily and hourly from the lips of her adored father and her venerated Daddy Crisp. Perhaps Fanny's attitude to language was altogether a little abnormal. She was immensely susceptible to the power of words, but not nervously or acutely as Jane Austen was. She adored fluency and the sound of language pouring warmly and copiously over the printed page. Directly she read *Rasselas*, enlarged and swollen sentences formed on the tip of her childish pen, in the manner of Dr. Johnson. Quite early in life she would go out of her way to avoid the plain name of Tomkins. Thus, whatever she heard from her Cabin at the end of the garden was sure to affect her more than most girls, and it is also clear that while her ears were sensitive to sound, her soul was

sensitive to meaning. There was something a little prudish in her nature. Just as she avoided the name of Tomkins, so she avoided the roughnesses, the asperities, the plainnesses of daily life. The chief fault that mars the extreme vivacity and vividness of the early diary is that the profusion of words tends to soften the edges, and the sweetness of the sentiment to smooth out the outlines. Thus, when she heard the sailors swearing, though Maria Allen, her half-sister would, one believes, have liked to stay, and perhaps toss a kiss over the water—her future history allows us to take the liberty of thinking so—Fanny went indoors.

Fanny went indoors, but not to solitary meditation. The house, whether it was in Lynn or in London—and by far the greater part of the year was spent in Poland Street—hummed with activity. There was the sound of the harpsichord; the sound of singing; there was the sound—for such concentration seems to pervade a whole house with its murmur—of Dr. Burney writing furiously, surrounded by notebooks in his study; and there were great bursts of chatter and laughter when, returning from their various occupations, the Burney children met together. Nobody enjoyed family life more than Fanny did. For there her shyness only served to fasten the nickname of Old Lady upon her; there she had a familiar audience for her humour; there she need not bother about her clothes; there—perhaps the fact that their mother had died when they were all young was partly the cause of it—was that intimacy which expresses itself in jokes and legends and a private language ('The wig is wet,' they would say, winking at each other); there were endless confabulations, and confidences between sisters and brothers and brothers and

sisters. Nor could there be any doubt that the Burneys—Susan and James and Charles and Fanny and Hetty and Charlotte—were a gifted race. Charles was a scholar; James was a humorist; Fanny was a writer; Susan was musical—each had some special gift or characteristic to add to the common stock. And besides their natural gifts they were happy in the fact that their father was a very popular man; a man, too, so admirably situated by his talents, which were social, and his birth, which was gentle, that they could mix without difficulty either with lords or with book-binders, and had, in fact, as free a run of life as could be wished.

As for Dr. Burney himself, there are some points about which, at this distance of time, one may feel dubious. It is difficult to be sure what, had one met him now, one would have felt for him. One thing is certain—one would have met him everywhere. Hostesses would be competing to catch him. Notes would wait for him. Telephone bells would interrupt him. For he was the most sought-after, the most occupied of men. He was always dashing in and dashing off. Sometimes he dined off a box of sandwiches in his carriage. Sometimes he went out at seven in the morning, and was not back from his round of music lessons till eleven at night. And when he was not teaching he was writing. The 'habitual softness of his manners', his great social charm, his haphazard untidy ways: everything, notes, money, manuscripts, was tossed into a drawer, and he was robbed of all his savings once, but his friends were delighted to make it up for him; his odd adventures—did he not fall asleep after a bad crossing at Dover, and so return to France and so have to cross the Channel again?—endeared him to everybody. It is, perhaps, his

diffuseness that makes him a trifle nebulous. He seems to be for ever writing and then re-writing, and requiring his daughters to write for him, endless books and articles, while over him unchecked, unfiled, unread, perhaps, pour down notes, letters, invitations to dinner which he cannot destroy and means some day to annotate and collect, until he seems to melt away at last in a cloud of words. When he died at the age of eighty-eight, there was nothing to be done by the most devoted of daughters but to burn the whole accumulation entire. Even Fanny's love of language was suffocated. But if we fumble a little as to our feeling for Dr. Burney, Fanny certainly did not. She adored her father. She never minded how many times she had to lay aside her own writing in order to copy out his. And he returned her affection. Though his ambition for her success at Court was foolish, perhaps, and almost cost her her life, she had only to cry when a distasteful suitor was pressed on her, 'Oh Sir, I wish for nothing! Only let me live with you!' for the emotional doctor to reply 'My Life! Thou shalt live with me for ever if thou wilt. Thou canst not think I meant to get rid of thee?' And not only were his eyes full of tears, but, what was more remarkable, he never mentioned Mr. Barlow again. Indeed, the Burneys were a happy family; a mixed composite, oddly assorted family; for there were the Allens, too, and little half-brothers and half-sisters were being born and growing up.

So time passed, and the passage of the years made it impossible for the family to continue in Poland Street any longer. First they moved to Queen Square, and then, in 1774, to the house where Newton had lived, in St. Martin's Street, Leicester Fields; where his Obser-

vatory still stood, and his room with the painted panels was still to be seen. Here in a mean street, but in the centre of the town, the Burneys set up their establishment. Here Fanny went on scribbling, stealing to the Observatory as she had stolen to the Cabin at Lynn, for she exclaimed, 'I cannot any longer resist what I find to be irresistible, the pleasure of popping down my thoughts from time to time upon paper'. Here came so many famous people either to be closeted with the doctor, or, like Garrick, to sit with him while his fine head of natural hair was brushed, or to join the lively family dinner, or, more formally to gather together in a musical party, where all the Burney children played and their father 'dashed away' on the harpsichord, and perhaps some foreign musician of distinction performed a solo—so many people came for one reason or another to the house in St. Martin's Street that it is only the eccentrics, the grotesques that catch the eye. One remembers, for instance, the Ajujari, the astonishing soprano, because she had been 'mauled as an infant by a pig, in consequence of which she is reported to have a silver side'. One remembers Bruce, the traveller, because he had a 'most extraordinary complaint. When he attempted to speak, his whole stomach suddenly seemed to heave like an organ bellows. He did not wish to make any secret about it, but spoke of it as having originated in Abyssinia. However, one evening, when he appeared rather agitated, it lasted much longer than usual, and was so violent that it alarmed the company.' One seems to remember, for she paints herself while she paints the others, Fanny herself slipping eagerly and lightly in and out of all this company, with her rather prominent gnat-like eyes, her shy, awkward

manners that concealed the quickest observation, the most retentive memory, so that as soon as the company had gone, she stole to the Observatory and wrote down every word, every scene, in letters twelve pages long for her beloved Daddy Crisp at Chessington. For that old hermit—he had retired to a house in a field in dudgeon with society—though professing to be better pleased with a bottle of wine in his cellar and a horse in his stable, and a game of backgammon at night, than with all the fine company in the world, was always agog for news. He scolded his Fannikin if she did not tell him all about her fine goings-on. And he scolded her again if she did not write at full tilt exactly as the words came into her head.

Mr. Crisp wanted to know in particular 'about Mr. Greville and his notions'. For, indeed, Mr. Greville was a perpetual source of curiosity. It is a thousand pities that time with her poppy dust has covered Mr. Greville, who was once so eminent so that only his most prominent features, his birth, his person, and his nose emerge. Fulke Greville was the descendant—he must, one fancies, have emphasized the fact from the way in which it is repeated—of the friend of Sir Philip Sidney. A coronet, indeed, 'hung almost suspended over his head'. In person he was tall and well proportioned. 'His face, features, and complexion were striking for masculine beauty.' 'His air and carriage were noble with conscious dignity'; his bearing was 'lofty, yet graceful'. But all these gifts and qualities, to which one must add that he rode and fenced and danced and played tennis to admiration, were marred by prodigious faults. He was supercilious in the extreme; he was selfish; he was fickle. He was a man of violent

temper. His introduction to Dr. Burney in the first place was due to his doubt whether a musician could be fit company for a gentleman. When he found that young Burney not only played the harpsichord to perfection, but curved his finger and rounded his hand as he played; that he answered plain 'Yes, Sir', or 'No, Sir', being more interested in the music than in his patron; that it was only indeed when Greville himself thrummed pertinaciously from memory that he could stand it no longer, and broke into vivacious conversation—it was only when he found that young Burney was not only gifted but well bred into the bargain that, being himself a very clever man, he no longer stood upon his dignity. Burney became his friend and equal. Burney, indeed, almost became his victim. For if there was one thing that the descendant of the friend of Sir Philip Sidney detested it was what he called 'fogrum'. By that expressive word he seems to have meant the middle-class virtues of discretion and respectability, as opposed to the aristocratic virtues of what he called '*ton*'. Life must be lived dashing, daringly, with perpetual display, even if the display was extremely expensive, and, as seemed possible to those who trailed dismally round his grounds praising the improvements, as boring to the man who had made them as to the unfortunate guests whose admiration he insisted upon extorting. But Greville could not endure fogrum in himself or in his friends. He threw the obscure young musician into the fast life of White's and Newmarket, and watched with amusement to see if he sank or swam. Burney, most adroit of men, swam as if born to the water, and the descendant of the friend of Sir Philip Sidney was pleased. From being his protégé, Burney became

his confidant. Indeed, the splendid gentleman, for all his high carriage, was in need of one. For Greville, could one wipe away the poppy dust that covers him, was one of those tortured and unhappy souls who find themselves torn asunder by opposite desires. On the one hand he was consumed with the wish to be in the first flight of fashion and to do 'the thing', however costly or dreary 'the thing' might be. On the other, he was secretly persuaded that 'the proper bent of his mind and understanding was for metaphysics'. Burney, perhaps, was a link between the world of *ton* and the world of fogrum. He was a man of breeding who could dice and bet with the bloods; he was also a musician who could talk of intellectual things and ask clever people to his house.

Thus Greville treated the Burneys as his equals, and came to their house, though his visits were often interrupted by the violent quarrels which he managed to pick even with the amiable Dr. Burney himself. Indeed, as time went on there was nobody with whom Greville did not quarrel. He had lost heavily at the gambling-tables. His prestige in society was sunk. His habits were driving his family from him. Even his wife, by nature gentle and conciliatory, though excessive thinness made her seem fitted to sit for a portrait 'of a penetrating, puissant and sarcastic fairy queen', was wearied by his infidelities. Inspired by them she had suddenly produced that famous Ode to Indifference, 'which had passed into every collection of fugitive pieces in the English language' and (it is Madam D'Arblay who speaks) 'twined around her brow a garland of wide-spreading and unfading fragrance'. Her fame, it may be, was another thorn in her husband's side; for he, too, was

an author. He himself had produced a volume of *Maxims and Characters*; and having 'waited for fame with dignity rather than anxiety, because with expectation unclogged with doubt', was beginning perhaps to become a little impatient. Fame held aloof. Meanwhile he was fond of the society of clever people, and it was largely at his desire that the famous party in St. Martin's Street met together that very cold night.

II

In those days, when London was so small, it was easier than now for people to stand out on an eminence which they scarcely struggled to keep, but enjoyed by unanimous consent. Everybody knew and remembered when they saw her that Mrs. Greville had written an *Ode to Indifference*; everybody knew that Mr. Bruce had travelled in Abyssinia; so, too, everybody knew that there was a house at Streatham presided over by a lady called Mrs. Thrale. Without troubling to write an ode, without hazarding her life among savages, without possessing either high rank or vast wealth, Mrs. Thrale was a celebrity. By the exercise of powers difficult to define—for to feel them one must have sat at table and noticed a thousand audacities and deftnesses and skilful combinations which die with the moment—Mrs. Thrale had the reputation of a great hostess. Her fame spread far beyond her house. People who had never seen her discussed her. People wanted to know what she was like; whether she was really so witty and so well read; whether it was a pose; whether she had a heart; whether she loved her husband the brewer, who seemed a dull dog; why she had married him; whether Dr. Johnson

was in love with her—what, in short, was the secret of her power. For power she had—that was indisputable.

Even then, perhaps, it would have been difficult to say in what it consisted. For she possessed the one quality which can never be named; she enjoyed the one gift which never ceases to excite discussion. Somehow or other she was a personality. The young Burneys, for instance, had never seen Mrs. Thrale or been to Streatham, but the stir which she set going round her had reached them in St. Martin's Street. When their father came back from giving his first music lesson to Miss Thrale at Streatham they flocked about him to hear his account of her mother. Was she as brilliant as people made out? Was she kind? Was she cruel? Had he liked her? Dr. Burney was in high good temper—in itself a proof of his hostess's power—and he replied, not, we may be sure, as Fanny rendered it, that she was a 'star of the first constellation of female wits: surpassing, rather than equalizing the reputation which her extraordinary endowments, and the splendid fortune which made them conspicuous, had blazoned abroad'—that was written when Fanny's style was old and tarnished, and its leaves were fluttering and falling profusely to the ground; the doctor, we may suppose, answered briskly that he had enjoyed himself hugely; that the lady was a very clever lady; that she had interrupted the lesson all the time; that she had a very sharp tongue—there was no doubt of that; but he would go to the stake for it that she was a good-hearted woman at bottom. Then they must have pressed to know what she looked like. She looked younger than her age—which was about forty. She was rather plump, very small, fair with very blue eyes, and had a scar or cut

on her lip. She painted her cheeks, which was unnecessary, because her complexion was rosy by nature. The whole impression she made on one was of bustle and gaiety and good temper. She was, he said, a woman 'full of sport', whom nobody could have taken for a creature that the doctor could not bear, a learned lady. Less obviously, she was very observant, as her anecdotes were to prove; capable of passion, though that was not yet visible at Streatham; and, while curiously careless and good-tempered about her dues as a wit or a blue stocking, had an amusing pride in being descended from a long line of Welsh gentry (whereas the Thrales were obscure), and drew satisfaction now and then from the reflection that in her veins ran the blood, as the College of Heralds acknowledged, of Adam of Salzburg.

Many women might have possessed these qualities without being remembered for them. Mrs. Thrale possessed besides one that has given her immortality: the power of being the friend of Dr. Johnson. Without that addition, her life might have fizzled and flamed to extinction, leaving nothing behind it. But the combination of Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale created something as solid, as lasting, as remarkable in its way as a work of art. And this was an achievement that called for much rarer powers on the part of Mrs. Thrale than the qualities of a good hostess. When the Thrales first met Johnson he was in a state of profound gloom, crying out such lost and terrible words that Mr. Thrale put his hand before his mouth to silence him. Physically, too, he was afflicted with asthma and dropsy; his manners were rough; his habits were gross; his clothes were dirty; his wig was singed; his linen was soiled; and he was the rudest of men. Yet Mrs. Thrale carried this

monster off with her to Brighton and then domesticated him in her house at Streatham, where he was given a room to himself, and where he spent habitually some days in the middle of every week. This might have been on her part but the enthusiasm of a curiosity hunter, ready to put up with a host of disagreeables for the sake of having at her house the original Dr. Johnson, whom anybody in England would gladly pay to see. But it is clear that her connoisseurship was of a finer type. She understood—her anecdotes prove it—that Dr. Johnson was somehow a rare, an important, an impressive human being whose friendship might be a burden but was certainly an honour. And it was not by any means so easy to know this then as it is now. What one knew then was that Dr. Johnson was coming to dinner. Who would be there, one wondered with anxiety? For if it was a Cambridge man there might be an outburst. If it was a Whig there would certainly be a scene. If it was a Scotsman anything might happen. Such were his whims and prejudices. Next one would have to bethink one, what had one ordered for dinner? For the food never went uncriticized; and even when one had provided him with young peas from the garden, one must not praise them. Were not the young peas charming, Mrs. Thrale asked once? and he turned upon her, after gobbling down masses of pork and veal pie with lumps of sugar in it, and snapped 'Perhaps they would be so—to a pig'. And then what would the talk be about, one must have speculated? If it got upon painting or music he was apt to dismiss it with scorn, for both arts were indifferent to him. Then if a traveller told a tale he was sure to pooh-pooh it, because he believed nothing that he had not seen. Then if any one were to express sorrow

in his presence it might well draw down upon one a rebuke for insincerity. 'When, one day, I lamented the loss of a cousin killed in America: "Prithee, my dear," said he, "have done with canting: how would the world be the worse for it, I may ask, if all your relations were at once spitted like larks, and roasted for Presto's supper?"' In short, the meal would be strewn with difficulties; the whole affair might run upon the rocks at any moment.'

Had Mrs. Thrale been a shallow curiosity hunter she would have shown him for a season or so and then let him drop. But Mrs. Thrale realized even at the moment that one must submit to be snubbed and bullied and irritated and offended by Dr. Johnson because—well, what was the force that sent an impudent and arrogant young man like Boswell slinking back to his chair like a beaten boy when Johnson bade him? Why did she herself sit up till four in the morning pouring out tea for him? There was a force in him that awed even a competent woman of the world, that subdued even a thick-skinned, conceited boy. He had a right to scold Mrs. Thrale for inhumanity, when she knew that he spent only seventy pounds a year on himself and with the rest of his income supported a houseful of decrepit and ungrateful lodgers. If he gobbled at table and tore the peaches from the wall he went back punctually to London to see that his wretched inmates had their three good meals over the week-end. Moreover, he was a warehouse of knowledge. If the dancing-master talked about dancing, Johnson could out-talk him. He could keep one amused by the hour with his tales of the underworld, of the toppers and scallywags who haunted his lodgings and claimed his bounty. He said things

casually that one never forgot. But what was perhaps more engaging than all his learning and virtue, was his love of pleasure, his detestation of the hermit, of the mere book-worm, his passion for life and society. And then, as a woman would, Mrs. Thrale loved him for his courage—that he had separated two fierce dogs that were tearing each other to pieces in Mr. Beauclerc's sitting-room; that he had thrown a man, chair and all, into the pit of a theatre; that, blind and twitching as he was, he rode to hounds on Brightelmstone Downs, and followed the hunt as if he had been a gay dog instead of a huge and melancholy old man. Moreover, there was a natural affinity between them. She drew him out: she made him say what without her he would never have said; indeed, he had confessed to her some painful secret of his youth which she never revealed to anybody. Above all, they shared the same passion. Of talk they could neither of them ever have enough.

Thus Mrs. Thrale could always be counted on to produce Dr. Johnson; and it was, of course, Dr. Johnson whom Mr. Greville most particularly wished to meet. As it happened, Dr. Burney had renewed his acquaintance with Dr. Johnson after many years, when he went to Streatham to give his first music lesson. Dr. Johnson had been there, 'wearing his mildest aspect'. For he remembered Dr. Burney with kindness. He remembered a letter that Dr. Burney had written to him in praise of the dictionary. He remembered, too, that Dr. Burney having called upon him, years ago, and found him out, had dared to cut some bristles from the hearth broom to send to an admirer. When he met Dr. Burney again at Streatham, he had instantly taken a liking to him; soon he was brought by Mrs. Thrale to see Dr. Burney's

books; it was quite easy, therefore, for Dr. Burney to arrange that on a certain night in the early spring of 1777 or 1778, Mr. Greville's great wish to meet Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale should be gratified. A day was fixed and the engagement was made.

Nobody could fail to be aware that the meeting of so many marked and distinguished characters might be difficult. Dr. Johnson was, of course, notoriously formidable. But the danger was not confined to Dr. Johnson; Mr. Greville himself was domineering and exacting; his temper had grown still more uncertain since his gambling losses had made him of less account in the world of *ton*. Then Mrs. Greville was a poetess; it was likely enough that she would prove her right to the laurel by some contest with a lady whose fame was at the moment brighter than her own. Mrs. Thrale was good humour itself; still, it was likely that she would try for a tilt with Mrs. Greville; nor was she wholly dependable, for she had 'sudden flashes of wit which she left to their own consequences'. Besides, it was an occasion; everybody felt it to be so; wits would be on the strain; expectation on tiptoe. Dr. Burney, with the tact of a man of the world, foresaw these difficulties, and took steps to avert them. But there was, one vaguely feels, something a little obtuse about Dr. Burney. The eager, kind, busy man, with his head full of music and his desk stuffed with notes, lacked discrimination. He had not noticed that Dr. Johnson, when he visited them the other day, and found them at the harpsichord, had withdrawn to the bookcase and browsed upon a volume of the *British Encyclopædia*, till the music was over. He was not aware, in spite of the way in which Mrs. Thrale interrupted his lessons, that she did not know

'a flat from a sharp'. To his innocent mind, music was the universal specific. If there was going to be any difficulty music would solve it. He therefore asked Signor Piozzi to be of the party.

The night arrived. The fire was lit. The chairs were placed. The company arrived. As Dr. Burney had foreseen, the awkwardness was great. Things indeed seemed to go wrong from the start. Dr. Johnson had come in his worsted wig, very clean and prepared evidently for enjoyment. But after one look at him, Mr. Greville seemed to decide that there was something formidable about the old man; it would be better not to compete; it would be better to play the fine gentleman, and leave it to literature to make the first advances. Murmuring, apparently, something about having the toothache, Mr. Greville 'assumed his most supercilious air of distant superiority and planted himself, immovable as a noble statue, upon the hearth'. He said nothing. Mrs. Greville was longing to distinguish herself, but judging it proper for Dr. Johnson to begin, she said nothing. Mrs. Thrale, who might have been expected to break up the solemnity, felt, it seemed, that the party was not her party and, waiting for the principals to engage, resolved to say nothing. Mrs. Crewe, the Grevilles' daughter, lovely and vivacious as she was, had come to be entertained and instructed and therefore very naturally she, too, said nothing. Nobody said anything. Everybody waited. Here was the very moment for which Dr. Burney in his wisdom had prepared. He nodded to Signor Piozzi; and Signor Piozzi stepped to the instrument and began to sing. Accompanying himself on the pianoforte, he sang an *aria parlante*. He sang beautifully, he sang his best. But far from

breaking the awkwardness and loosing the tongues, the music increased the constraint. Nobody spoke. Everybody waited for Dr. Johnson to begin. There, indeed, they showed their fatal ignorance, for if there was one thing that Dr. Johnson never did, it was to begin. Somebody had always to start a topic before he consented to pursue it or to demolish it. Now he waited in silence to be challenged. But he waited in vain. Nobody dared. The roulades of Signor Piozzi continued uninterrupted. As he saw his chance of a pleasant evening of conversation diminish, Dr. Johnson sank into silent abstraction and sat with his back to the piano gazing at the fire. The *aria parlante* continued uninterrupted. At last the strain became unendurable. At last Mrs. Thrale could stand it no longer. It was the attitude of Mr. Greville, apparently, that roused her resentment. There he stood on the hearth in front of the fire 'staring around him at the whole company in curious silence sardonically'. What right had he, even if he were the descendant of the friend of Sir Philip Sidney, to despise the company and absorb the fire? Her own pride of ancestry suddenly asserted itself. Did not the blood of Adam of Salzburg run in her veins? Was it not as blue as that of the Grevilles and far more sparkling? Giving rein to the spirit of recklessness which sometimes bubbled in her, she rose, and stole on tiptoe to the pianoforte. Signor Piozzi was still singing and accompanying himself dramatically as he sang. She began a ludicrous mimicry of his gestures: she shrugged her shoulders, she cast up her eyes, she reclined her head on one side just as he did. At this singular display the company began to titter—indeed, it was a scene that was to be described 'from coterie to coterie throughout London, with com-

ments and sarcasms of endless variety'. People who saw Mrs. Thrale at her mockery that night never forgot that this was the beginning of that criminal affair, the first scene of that 'most extraordinary drama' which lost Mrs. Thrale the respect of friends and children, which drove her in ignominy from England, and scarcely allowed her to show herself in London again—this was the beginning of her most reprehensible, her most unnatural passion for one who was not only a musician but a foreigner. All this still lay on the laps of the gods. Nobody yet knew of what iniquity the vivacious lady was capable. She was still the respected wife of a wealthy brewer. Happily, Dr. Johnson was staring at the fire, and knew nothing of the scene at the piano. But Dr. Burney put a stop to the laughter instantly. He was shocked that his guest, even if he were a foreigner and a musician, should be ridiculed behind his back, and stealing to Mrs. Thrale he whispered kindly but with authority in her ear that if she had no taste for music herself she should consider the feelings of those who had. Mrs. Thrale took the rebuke with admirable sweetness, nodded her acquiescence and returned to her chair. But she had done her part. After that nothing more could be expected from her. Let them now do what they chose—she washed her hands of it, and seated herself 'like a pretty little Miss', as she said afterwards, to endure what yet remained to be endured 'of one of the most humdrum evenings that she had ever passed'.

If no one had dared to tackle Dr. Johnson in the beginning it was scarcely likely that they would dare now. He had apparently decided that the evening was a failure so far as talk was concerned. If he had not

come dressed in his best clothes he might have had a book in his pocket which he could have pulled out and read. As it was, nothing but the resources of his own mind were left him; but these were huge; and these he explored as he sat with his back to the piano, looking the very image of gravity, dignity and composure.

At last the *aria parlante* came to an end. Signor Piozzi indeed, finding nobody to talk to, fell asleep in his solitude. Even Dr. Burney by this time must have been aware that music is not an infallible specific; but there was nothing for it now. Since people would not talk, the music must continue. He called upon his daughters to sing a duet. And then, when that was over, there was nothing for it but that they must sing another. Signor Piozzi still slept, or still feigned sleep. Dr. Johnson explored still further the magnificent resources of his own mind. Mr. Greville still stood superciliously upon the hearth-rug. And the night was cold.

But it was a grave mistake to suppose that because Dr. Johnson was apparently lost in thought, and certainly almost blind, he was not aware of anything, particularly of anything reprehensible, that was taking place in the room. His 'starts of vision' were always astonishing and almost always painful. So it was on the present occasion. He suddenly woke up. He suddenly roused himself. He suddenly uttered the words for which the company had been waiting all the evening.

'If it were not for depriving the ladies of the fire,' he said, looking fixedly at Mr. Greville, 'I should like to stand upon the hearth myself!' The effect of the outburst was prodigious. The Burney children said afterwards that it was as good as a comedy. The descendant of the friend of Sir Philip Sidney quailed before the

Doctor's glance. All the blood of all the Brookes rallied itself to overcome the insult. The son of a bookseller should be taught his place. Greville did his best to smile—a faint, scoffing smile. He did his best to stand where he had stood the whole evening. He stood smiling, or trying to smile, for two or perhaps for three minutes more. But when he looked round the room and saw all eyes cast down, all faces twitching with amusement, all sympathies plainly on the side of the bookseller's son, he could stand there no longer. Fulke Greville slunk away, sloping even his proud shoulders, to a chair. But as he went, he rang the bell 'with force'. He demanded his carriage.

'The party then broke up; and no one from amongst it ever asked, or wished for its repetition.'

F. L. LUCAS

OF SILENCE

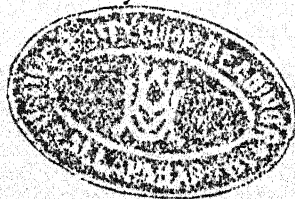
'*Conticuere om*'—so runs a half-finished sentence which the spade has brought to light among the scribblings on the street-walls of Pompeii. '*Conticuere omnes*'—'all fell silent'—it is a strangely fitting phrase for that city of the dead; as if it had been in some moment of second-sight that this Virgilian description of the hush of the court of Carthage before Æneas's story of the last night of Troy, was thus scrawled by an idler's hand on the walls of the Campanian city—itsself so soon to pass likewise through a fiery darkness into an eternal silence; as if, too, in the fearful suddenness with which fulfilment followed, time had even been lacking to complete the last three letters of this writing on the wall. To this day I know no ruins where silence broods with a deeper majesty. It is enough to turn aside from the main streets, with their modern crowds of sight-seers, down some quiet side-alley leading to the open countryside, and to sit watching that silvery smoke, pallid as death, curl on and on eternally from the grey cone of Vesuvius above the cypresses: the silence of the past is there; the silence of the present; the silence also of that future when all our world will lie at last like one wide Pompeii. For there is nothing more ancient than silence, nothing more destined to endure. We forget that (since sound requires an atmosphere) our noisy little earth is only a clamorous islet, a transitory Pithecusa of the Apes, lost in an infinity of stillness. Among the short-lived deities of men Silence has never had an altar: but she will

remain when other gods are not even the ghosts of a twilight memory, and the last vain cry of their last worshipper has died away.

It is strange, indeed, that the Greeks, whose vivid fancy could bestow a maiden's beauty and a broken heart even on the empty voice of Echo, imagined no such gracious embodiment for Silence; which played a part indeed in their religion, but never gained there a personality. It was enjoined at their sacrifices, lest a word of ill-omen should fall from some heedless tongue; it was the attribute of their deities; but it was never a deity itself. To Pan belonged that 'panic' hush which lurks among the mountains of Greece and Sicily through the noiseless hours that follow noon; when the forest stills its leaves and its beasts lie low for fear lest the sleeping Goat-god wake in anger, while the uneasy traveller hears his own heart beating in the quiet of the hills. And again, one of those sudden pauses in the talk of a whole gathering, which our grandmothers used to attribute to 'angels' wings', would move a Greek to say: 'Hermes is come into the room'.

Similarly, even amid the innumerable divinities of ancient Rome, Silence still remained an unknown goddess. Vaticanus they knew, the god of the child's first cry; and Fabulinus, who watched over its first articulate word; and shapes more shadowy still, like Aius Locutius, the Voice that spoke once in the darkness, with one vain warning of the coming of the Gauls: but for that august power whose finger is laid for ever on her lips, no place was left in their crowded pantheon, and no prayer called on her who had never uttered word.

Yet if silence had no divinity for the Ancients, they



set it high indeed as a virtue; the cult which no priest offered, was paid with endless reiteration by sage, philosopher, and poet. Indeed, from the fervour with which the Greeks praised silence, it is clear how little they practised it. The commodity was so precious because so rare. Hence that rather naïve admiration of the rest of Hellas for the gruff laconism of the Spartans, expressed in endless anecdotes like the tale of their answer to Philip of Macedon. For when that King wrote threatening that if once he came within the marches of Laconia, he would leave them not one stone standing upon another, they wrote in reply the one word: 'If'. But throughout the rest of Greece only philosophers could aspire to this laconic standard; Plutarch, for instance, records with what we feel to be excessive edification, the retort of Zeno at a dinner given in Athens to the ambassadors of Persia. There the Founder of Stoicism, amid the chatter of his more frivolous fellow-philosophers, preserved a rigid taciturnity: 'whereupon the said Embassadors and strangers of *Persia* began to bee merrie with him and to drinke unto him round, saying in the end: "And what shall we report of you, Sir *Zeno*, unto the king our Master?" "Marie (quoth he), no more but this, that there is an ancient man at *Athens* who can sit at the boord and say nothing.'"

There are colder climates we could name where the accomplishment in question is less remarkable. But Plutarch is lost in admiration ('Thus you see that silence argueth deepe and profound wisdom'), and reinforces so excellent a lesson with the no less excellent example of the geese of Cilicia, 'who when they be to take a flight into *Cilicia* over the mountaine *Taurus*, which is full of eagels, take up everie one in their bill

a good big stone, which serveth them instead of a Locke or bridle to restrain their gagling; by which devise they may passe all night long without any noise, and not be heard at all or descried by the said eagles'.

There is, indeed, a good deal of curious information in Plutarch's whole essay 'Of Garrulity'—a passably garrulous piece of work itself; containing various other apt illustrations of its theme, such as the silly barber who got himself tortured for babbling in Peiraeus the first dim rumour of the Sicilian disaster, and was no sooner untied from the rack than he turned to the executioner and begged him for any later news that might have arrived meanwhile; or the retort of Aristotle to one 'who after much prittle-prattle and a long discourse, said thus unto him: "I doubt I have bin tedious unto you, Philosopher, with my many words"; "No, in good sooth (quoth Aristotle unto him), for I gave no care at all unto you."' Certainly, when Plutarch sums up with the assertion that 'taciturnity hath not only this one fair property and good virtue, that (as Hippocrates saith) it never breedeth thirst; but also that it engendreth no pain, no griefe nor displeasure'—in the face of that revealing utterance we who know, alas, much better, may dismiss our last doubts of the loquacity of ancient Greece, the true fatherland of that Garrulous Man of Theophrastus whose very children tease him, saying at bedtime: 'Talk to us, papa, that we may go to sleep'. For an instant the modern reader seems to hear, as through the door of a banquet-hall momentarily opened, the gay babel of all those lively voices, stilled now for so many centuries, which Aristophanes mocked for their 'Everlasting Eh?'¹ All the

¹ τοῦτο τοῦπιχώριον ἀτεχνῶς ἐπανθεῖ τὸ 'τί λέγεις σύ;'

deeper was the admiration of the Athenians for exceptions to their rule like the heroic prostitute Leaina, who died silently under the torturers' hands, without a word to betray the plot of Harmodius and Aristogiton the tyrannicides; and was honoured by the liberated republic with a brazen statue, suggested by her name, of a lioness without a tongue.

The temper of Rome was more like laconic Sparta, in this as in other ways, than the rest of Greece; as we in our turn are closer to Rome than Athens. So that the Latin writers, and our own, have talked less of the importance of talking little. And yet in our earlier literature, of the period when England is alleged to have been 'merry', and its levity unfavourably contrasted with the gravity of France, there are still a good many counterparts of those endless Greek adages on the excellence of reticence.

Whatsoever be in thy brest,
Stop thy mouth with thy fist,
And lok thou think well of had-I-wist,
And bere a horne and blow it naught.

If thou dost harbour sorrow, let not thine arrow
know it; whisper it but to thy saddle-bow and ride
abroad with song.

Or, more vividly—

Wikked tungë breketh bone,
Thow the tungës self hath none:

which is much more pointed than its Hebrew original in Proverbs: 'By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone'. Such, too, was the

moral impressed by his mother, with a none too edifying story of a heathen god, on Chaucer's Maunciple—

Heed wel thy tong and think upon the crow.

But, after all, such precepts are world-wide: even in far Arabia 'the tree of silence bears the fruit of peace'. Aphorisms are of interest less for their truth than for their style; less for their collective wisdom than for the humour of their incessant contradictions of one another; less for the light they throw on conduct than for that other light they throw on the characters which coined them. For the modern mind is incredulous of homespun wisdom, and inclined to dismiss all saws and adages to the cheese-trenchers and porridge-bowls of shops dedicated to the arts and crafts. The proverbs of the populace, like the laws of the critics and the commandments of the churches, have been found out too often. They are too simple for life's complexities; they are self-contradictory; they are threadbare. Euripides himself, in his aphoristic moods reminds us uncomfortably of Sancho Panza. We, too, suffer from the inability of human beings to hold their tongues; we, too, face in our private lives the same 'ordeals by tattle'; we, too, have to listen to the admiratory noises of our friends before landscapes and works of art and, still worse, are expected to reply in kind; we have even seen armies perish for the failure of some one behind them in this simple art of silence; but it is in silence, on the whole, that we endure our lack of it. For, indeed, one of the most striking peculiarities of our age is that the intelligent have come in general to think less about improving the rest of mankind than ever before; whether from fatalism, because it is seldom possible to improve them, or from sceptical in-

difference amid the general breakdown of the imperative mood, or from a greater politeness in tolerating creeds of conduct that differ from our own. In consequence, moralists are almost extinct; they have given place to psychologists, and psychologists are scientists, and scientists think of truth and error, not of good and evil. The tree of silence still bears the fruit of peace, but we have no ears for truths put so. Yet it amuses me for a moment to recall side by side with the directness of such ancient wisdom Proust's picture (so true in essence, despite all its exaggerations and improbabilities) of the tortured unhappiness of a modern passion; where the lover finds the only respite from his misery with Albertine in the silent moments of her sleep beside him, when peace flowers an instant, even for him, between the breasts of despair. All who have learnt how speech can come to seem a means only of misunderstanding, letters but bottomless pitfalls, words mere veils across a sympathy which might, perhaps, have shone clearly without them, must feel here as if they had come suddenly upon a landscape but too well known. Even in that desert of the soul the tree of silence still bears its fruit of peace: or so it seems for a moment. Then the mirage fades and the ache of thirst comes back again.

But here, indeed, we have passed from proverbs to poetry, from Polonius to Hamlet. It is, indeed, only when silence becomes beautiful that it becomes really interesting: yet how often that is! But it is the poets who have found it out: even the rhythm of their verses, in a way of its own, puts into practice their discovery. The music, the sonority, the trumpet-calls and organ-notes of poetry we all know: we think less often of its gracious silences. The poet rises—'*conticuere omnes*', a hush falls

round him. But Silence is more than merely the herald who gains him hearing: she is also the quiet partner of his harmonies. Such, for example, is the grace of those moments when in the marble colonnade of Virgil's polished and fluted hexameters appears suddenly, like a broken pillar, a line that lacks its end. The learned have disputed whether these short lines, peculiar to him among Roman poets, were left so of set purpose; or are in all cases, to use his own phrase of at least some of them, mere 'props' to uphold temporarily his great fabric, which still lacked the final touches when the dying poet ordered his executors to give it to the flames. This view seems on the whole the likelier: there are no parallels for such a deliberate use of short lines anywhere in ancient hexameters, as there are in English blank verse.¹ But few can regret the splendid incompleteness of such a cadence as ends, for instance, the dirge for Umbro the Marsian, the leech whose skill in healing others could not save him when he went down before the Dardan spear:

neque eum juvere in vulnera cantus
 Somniferi et Marsis quaesitae in montibus herbae.
 Te nemus Anguitiae, vitrea te Fucinus umbra,
Te liquidī flevēre lacus.

¹ It has been urged as a proof that Virgil's half-lines were not meant to be completed, that Ovid said of a couplet of Varro Atacinus: 'It would be better without the last half-line'. But that is forcing the evidence. The couplet, a translation of Apollonius Rhodius and, appropriately enough, about silence, is:

Desierant latrare canes urbesque silebant;
 Omnia noctis erant placida composita quiete.

The Greek original is far finer:

οὐδὲ κυνῶν ὕλακῇ ἔτ' ἀνὰ πτόλιν, οὐ θρόος ἦεν
 ῥῆχῃς· σιγῇ δὲ μελαινομένην ἔχεν ὄρφνην.

Thy hurts not all thy drowsy chants could heal,
Nor all the magic herbs on Marsian hills.
The glassy shadows of the Fucine lake
Did weep for thee, for thee Anguitia's grove,
For thee the watery meres.

Even Virgil could hardly have added to that without taking something away; and the grasshopper that, when a string broke in the middle of a musical contest, perched on the Greek minstrel's lyre to supply the missing notes, was not a happier collaborator than silence here becomes. So, too, with the silent music of the ever-varying pauses in Virgil's verse, or Shakespeare's, or Milton's; and again how many of our lyric measures owe half their beauty simply to the pleasure of the ear in finding a line shortened and its expected symmetry of sound replaced by a sudden peace! That is a charm as old as Sappho and as modern as Tennyson and Swinburne; who gave new youth to worn-out stanzas, as Medea with her knife to Aeson, simply by lopping their closing cadences—for instance, in the metres of 'The Palace of Art', 'A Dream of Fair Women', or 'Dolores':

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves,
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

Whereto the other with a downward brow:
'I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirled by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,
Then when I left my home.'

Like ashes the low cliffs crumble,
The banks drop down in the dust,

The heights of the hills are made humble,
As a reed's is the strength of their trust;
As a city's that armies environ,
The strength of their stay is of sand;
But the grasp of the sea is as iron,
Laid hard on the land.

Or the hush may come before the last line, as in
Housman's:

Wenlock Edge was umbered
And bright was Abdon Burf,
And warm between them slumbered
The smooth green miles of turf,
Until from grass and clover
The upshot beam would fade
And England over
Advanced the lofty shade.

Which in its turn, it may well be by coincidence, recalls
that lovely halt and check of Campion's:

Kind are her answers,
But her performance keeps no day,
Breaks time as dancers,
From their own music when they stray.

The dramatists, again, just as the poets have made
Silence finish their lines for them, have brought her to
fill a part upon their stage; above all (by a paradox
which is yet a natural combination of opposites) the
loudest-tongued among them, Aeschylus. Perhaps, gleaner
from Homer's banquet as he was, he remembered that
angry silence with which the wraith of Ajax turns from
Odysseus in Hades and stalks away with great strides

across the meadows of asphodel; which Virgil certainly remembered when he made Dido's spirit turn likewise, without a word, from the lover who had left her to die; and which Longinus has praised as an instance of those great things in literature whose greatness is independent of the form and language of their expression. But no less fine is the effect in Aeschylus, when behind the dry crash of the hammers that crucify him high up on Caucasus, endures the silence of Prometheus; behind the shoutings that welcome the King of Kings up the Argive street, the silence of Cassandra. So too, in other plays of his now lost to us, Achilles sat and brooded speechless; speechless, for two whole scenes, the childless Niobe by her slain children's tomb; like Rachel, refusing to be comforted or a Job drawn by Blake. The silences of Sophocles and Euripides are less titanic; but there, too, Eurydice and Dejanira steal away to slip the fatal noose about their necks, without a word; and Jocasta likewise, with only one final cry. Phaedra, too, speaks not a syllable to the man for whose love she is dying, when they at last meet face to face; nor Alcestis to the husband who had let her die for him, when she comes back from the dead. In the words of that line of Seneca which the Elizabethans were never tired of quoting:

Curae leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.

Slight griefs find utterance: agony is dumb.

Aristophanes might mock at the adamantine silences of Aeschylus; but in loquacious Athens this other art of reticence was clearly also understood.

It may be that necessity helped slightly to mother their invention; on a stage whose tradition allowed only three speaking actors, and so only three speaking parts

in any scene, while the rest remained 'dumb faces', κωφὰ πρόσωπα, it was a great artistic economy temporarily to hand over one of the main characters in this way to a super. Certainly our modern drama, free from this accidental restriction, has seldom drawn such eloquence from dumbness. The silence of the ghost in *Hamlet*, or of the midnight in *Macbeth*; of Iago, when his guilt is laid open, or of Hermione, when she comes back like Alcestis to a husband unworthy of her innocence; of Cordelia in *Lear* or of Virgilia, 'my gracious silence', in *Coriolanus*—all these are faint compared with Aeschylus. Indeed, beside the Greeks, we with our shouting stage-crowds, our alarums and excursions, are like Homer's Trojans, marching with their barbarous uproar against the disciplined hush of the Achaean host.

And yet on the stage of life, at all events, the dramatic value of silence has been fully rediscovered by some of our Romantics. The great of the eighteenth century had already come to despise laughter, so that Fontenelle could say disdainfully 'je ne fais jamais ah-ah-ah', and Lord Chesterfield could not recollect having given way to it 'since I had the use of my reason'; early in the nineteenth century Lord Byron went on to despise even speech. He was, indeed, perpetually torn between the rival splendours of proud rhetoric and of prouder silence, until he found the last for ever in the earth of Misso-longhi:

Mute,

The camel labours with the heaviest load
And the wolf dies in silence—not bestowed
In vain should such example be; if they,
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,

Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay,
May temper it to bear—it is but for a day.

Nor, again, was it in Shelley's mind only that the suffering Titan with his lips proudly locked rose again from the abyss of Time. Caucasus grew crowded. Alone on his desolate height brooded the ineffable scorn and *ennui* of Chateaubriand: 'Je voudrais n'être pas né ou être à jamais oublié. . . . Je regarde passer à mes pieds ma dernière heure.' And after him, in Byron's footsteps, Alfred de Vigny in his turn cried his silence to the silent heavens and the silent earth:

Les grands pays muets longuement s'étendront.

Le juste opposera le dédain à l'absence,
Et ne répondra plus que par un froid silence
Au silence éternel de la Divinité.

Seul le silence est grand, tout le reste est faiblesse.

There is, indeed, always a slightly false ring about a taciturnity that cries out to be heard; and yet those who are not too English may grant a magnificence of its own to such rhetoric. The English, unfortunately, can seldom appreciate rhetoric of any kind, and so remain permanently astonished at the continental reputation of a Byron. They think it is because they are too honest; foreigners might say it was because they were too hypocritical; both may be right. In any case, we, too, have had our romantic cult (now grown rather a jest) of 'strong, silent men', though we prefer that they should leave their silence for others to remark upon. And even to-day the silence which commemorates the Armistice in England conforms to that ideal—a fine conception in

so far as it springs from a hatred of windy eloquence above graves too deep for words; though slightly detestable also to some who sense in it a touch of that hypocritical complacency of ours, which is glad to substitute a ceremony for any real thought of the horror of the thing and of the menace of its return. And some, too, not the least truly English for that, resent even the momentary interference that this silence imposes on the freedom of the individual. Still, of all the war memorials in Europe few are as dignified; and had we read of it as a custom of ancient Rome, we should surely admire its sublime simplicity.

The trouble with the sublime from Homer's day to ours is that in man, unlike Nature, it has that proverbial first-cousinship to the ridiculous. 'Le sublime est si peu naturel': the sophisticated mind is slow to bow the knee, or breathe an 'O altitudo!' To beauty it may still surrender open-armed: in sublimity it may sense a challenge, and be provoked. 'You dare not laugh at the Sphinx,' cries Kinglake. And certainly of the sublimity of silence this oldest instance still remains the greatest. 'Abou el Houl', the Arab calls her—'the father of terror'. 'You dare not laugh at the Sphinx'? And yet I dare say that Horace or Montaigne or Voltaire would have dared to smile, even at her. For even she is, after all, a monument of the vanity, of the mad callousness, of man. But if even Solomon in all his glory is not safe amid his bodyguards from absurdity, at least the lilies of the field are. And that is not simply because humanity is more easily grotesque than Nature. The Alps have seemed hideous to generations: but I never heard of a race that mocked the rose. Certainly human things can far more easily and more often be beautiful or gracious

or pathetic, than sublime: to tower beyond the reach of laughter is a privilege shared with Nature only by some rare Michelangelo. Beauty is surer than sublimity. And so, magnificent as Silence has sometimes been in human art and life, it is more often as something gracious and lovely that she has won men's hearts. Above all, the poets have felt her spell; as if in their agelong struggle to break with brief music the stillness of eternity they had grown in love with their 'sweet enemy'. Sometimes it is for the pure beauty of her peace—'the silence that is in the starry sky, The sleep that is among the lonely hills'; as in Virgil's 'amica silentia lunae', or Alcman's verses on evening stillness, less known than Goethe's famous adaptation of them:

Εὔδουσιν δ' ὄρέων κορυφαί τε καὶ φάραγγες,
 πρώνες τε καὶ χαράδραι,
 φύλα θ' ἔρπετὰ τόσσα τρέφει μέλαινα γαῖα,
 θῆρες τ' ὀρεσκόωι καὶ γένος μελισσᾶν
 καὶ κνώδαλ' ἐν βένθεσι πορφυρίας ἄλός,
 εὔδουσιν δ' ὄϊων
 φύλα τανυπτερύγων.

Now sleep the mountain-summits, sleep the glens,
 The peaks, the torrent-beds; and things that creep
 On the dark earth lie slumbering in their dens;
 Hushed are the mountain-beasts, the swarming bees,
 The monsters hidden in the purple seas;
 Soft and deep
 The birds of heaven sleep.

No less perfect are the lines of our own Arnold, with his classic love of tranquil things:

Round our hearts with long caresses,
 With low sighs hath silence stole.

Is not on cheeks like those
Lovely the flush?
Ah, so the quiet was,
So was the hush.

But of the simpler charm of silence I know no praises
to equal Herrick's. Poet of a perfect ear, he has almost a
passion for quiet, or those gentle sounds that break its
hush so little as to make it but the deeper:

The mellow touch of musick most doth wound
The Soule, when it doth rather sigh, than sound.

Upon thy Forme more wrinkles yet will fall,
And comming downe, shall make no noise at all.

Fall on me like a silent dew,
Or like those Maiden showers,
Which by the peepe of day, doe strew
A baptime o're the flowers.

So Good-luck came, and on my roof did light,
Like noyse-lesse Snow; or as the dew of night.

But loveliest of all are his lovers:

They tread on clouds, and though they sometimes fall,
They fall like dew, but make no noise at all.
So silently they one to th' other come,
As colours steal into the Peare or Plum,
And Aire-like, leave no presson to be seen
Where e're they met, or parting place has been.

Beside such silence, purely beautiful, stands a silence
of another kind, still pleasant, but with a slight touch

of terror; like the landscape of that Castle of Indolence built in the clouds by James Thomson (who spent his own days indolently abed, because 'I see no motive to rise, man'):

Full in the passage of the vale, above,
A sable, silent, solemn forest stood,
Where naught but shadowy forms was seen to move
As Idlesse fancied in her dreaming mood;
And up the hills, on either side, a wood
Of blackening pines aye waving to and fro
Sent forth a sleepy horror through the blood;
And where this valley winded out below,
The murmuring main was heard and scarcely heard
to flow.

Increase that sinister suspense and let the pleasure further dwindle till it vanishes—you have then the darker silence of the Woods of Westermmain with the phantom eyes beneath their leaves; or of the forests of La Fontaine's warning:

O belles, évitez
Le fond des bois et leur vaste silence;

or the midnight hush of the Ballad of True Thomas:

About the dead hour of night
He heard the bridles ring:

or those 'severa silentia noctis' of Lucretius, which contrast so characteristically with Virgil's 'friendly' moon.
Few read Valerius Flaccus now; but I can never turn

without a thrill to the meeting of his Jason and Medea in the blackness of the Colchian wood:

Obvius ut sera cum se sub nocte magistris
Impingit pecorique pavor, qualesve profundum
Per Chaos occurrunt caecae sine vocibus umbrae;
Haud secus in mediis noctis nemorisque tenebris
Inciderant ambo attoniti juxtaque subibant;
Abietibus tacitis aut immotis cyparissis
Adsimiles, rapidus nondum quas miscuit Auster.

Just as, when nights grow late, breaks suddenly
Panic on herd and herdsman; or as when
In depths of Chaos dumb, blind phantoms meet;
So in the midnight darkness of the wood
Those two drew near, and met, and stood aghast;
Like noiseless firs or moveless cypresses
Ere wild South-westerners whirl them both in one.

Of this kind was that silence of infinitude before which cowered the lost soul of Pascal. But here we approach the borders of yet another province of silence—that where the fullness of some menacing presence is replaced by a Saharan emptiness, which even the sense of something hostile would at least make less unutterably desolate.

Or again this silence of suspense, instead of pressing threateningly forward, or thinning into empty desolation, may recede into the background, where it remains as an aloofly watching presence; so that the same starry silence which terrified Pascal, whispered ironically to Emerson in moments of lost self-control: 'So hot, my little sir?' Menace has here given place to impassivity. So for Catullus the silence of the constellations looked

down unmoved on the stolen loves of men; for Theocritus,
on his witch-maiden's love for ever lost:

ἡνίδε σιγῇ μὲν πόντος, σιγῶντι δ' ἄῃται·
ἀ δ' ἐμὰ οὐ σιγῇ στέρνων ἔντοσθεν ἀνία.

Quiet lies the sea, and quiet all the winds;
But never quiet the anguish at my heart.

There is the same cold calm in that deserted house
where de la Mare's Traveller vainly knocks, sinister and
silent as Childe Rowland's Dark Tower:

But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely traveller's call.

And yet again there is a still deadlier Silence: not
threatening for the future, nor watching the present,
but brooding over what is for ever past—

That after-silence when the feast is o'er,
And void the places where the minstrels stood.

She, too, is beautiful, with that sinister beauty of
Proserpine which the Psyche of Apuleius breathed and
died. Hers is the fascination of the whirlpool for the
floating leaf: that fascination which Freud in our own
day, abandoning himself for a moment to the dream-
poetry of a sort of Platonic myth, has pictured as a

longing of the elements of the living body, not for resurrection, but for death—a 'nostalgie de la poussière':

Still my bones within me say
'Another night, another day'.

Hence in part, it may be, that physical beauty of Death in Greek sculpture, so different from the skulls and skeletons of our Gothic barbarism; hence, too, that passion of poets for 'easeful Death', their impulse to kill tragically the creations they have themselves made and loved, their sense of the supreme eloquence of mouths that speak no more—'O *eloquent*, just, and mighty Death'. It may be the silence of mortality:

She turned her face unto the wa',
And there her very heart it brak.

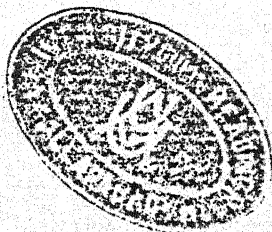
Clerk Saunders he started, and Margaret she turned
Into his arms as asleep she lay,
And deep and silent was the night
That fell atween thir twae.

Or it may be the silence of a god whose oracle has fallen dumb, as in that last cry of pagan Delphi:

εἶπατε τῷ βασιλῇ, χαμαὶ πέσε δαίδαλος αὐλά·
οὐκέτι Φοῖβος ἔχει καλύβαν, οὐ μάντιδα δάφνην,
οὐ παγὰν λαλέουσιν· ἀπέσβετο καὶ λάλον ὕδωρ.

Say ye to Cæsar, 'Lo, the hall divine
Is fallen, Phoebus holds no more his shrine,
His prescient laurel, his fount of prophecy—
Yea, e'en the speaking spring is dead and dry'.

Or the silence where the home of a whole dead race has been swallowed in the sea:



Miles on miles on miles of desolation!
Leagues on leagues on leagues without a change!
Sign or token of some eldest nation
Here would make the strange land not so strange.
Time-forgotten, yea since time's creation,
Seem these borders where the sea-birds range.

Slowly, gladly, full of fear and wonder
Grows his heart who journeys here alone,
Earth and all its thoughts of earth sink under,
Deep, as deep in water sinks a stone;
Hardly knows it if the rollers thunder,
Hardly whence the lonely wind is blown.

Or, last of all, it may be that final silence of a ruined world:

When the great markets by the sea shut fast,
All that calm Sunday that goes on and on;
When even lovers find their peace at last,
And Earth is but a star that once had shone.

Indeed, in the hubbub of the momentary population of this planet, it is hard to conceive the soundlessness of the universe that engulfs it, or the strangeness of a lunar landscape, such as ours too will become, where (could we live a moment in its airlessness) we might watch some stony avalanches sweep down a mountain side without a whisper. For even Echo, nymph though she be, cannot exist where air is not.

It would be easy, then, to compile an Anthology of Silence—from Homer's pictures of lightly-falling snow or windless starlight down to the Cupid of Ausonius, in

the twilight of the pagan gods, crucified in that garden of Proserpine:

*Inter arundineasque comas gravidumque papaver,
Et tacitos sine labe lacus, sine murmure rivos;*

Amid the tresses of the rushes, and the poppy's heavy
head,
And fleckless meres whose voice is still, and streams
whose murmur's dead.

and again from the beginnings of our own literature, 'the Fight at Finnsburg', with its raven hovering sombre and mute above the battlefield, on to Malory and the silence of the mere where Excalibur was cast away. There, too, would follow Sidney's quietly climbing moon; Webster's dying Flamineo, 'in the way to study a long silence'; Chapman invoking the dumb midnight sky—

All ye peaceful regents of the night,
Silently gliding exhalations,
Languishing winds, and murmuring falls of water;

the young Donne creeping to his mistress, with even the rustling of his silks subdued; Traherne's childish terror in the lonely field at evening, and Vaughan's soft-stepping night, and Cowper's days stealing as noiselessly upon him as Lear's horsemen shod with felt; Pope's creeping *Macotis* in the stillness of its freezing steppe, and Crabbe's 'ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea'; Parnell's ghostly beauties, who

range the reeds and o'er the poppies sweep
That nodding bend beneath their load of sleep,

and that 'rifted spire' of Langhorne's, nodding to its fall above the village dead:

When that too shakes the trembling ground,
Borne down by some tempestuous sky,
And many a slumbering cottage round
Startles—how still their hearts will lie!

Then the Romantic Revival would almost embarrass the anthologist with its riches—the silence that seized Wordsworth on the hills, and Coleridge's mariner on his stagnant sea; Endymion's 'little noiseless noise among the leaves', and the dumb, fallen Saturn of *Hyperion*; the cursed midnight of Manfred, and the charnel-hush of Beddoes, broken only by the low rustle of the dead turning unquietly in their shrouds; Landor's eagle in its still eyrie up the mountain-side, and the silent forests that sealed in one mystic moment Browning's love, and the haunted taciturnities of Hardy's world.

That might make not the poorest of anthologies: compile it who will. Few subjects can be exhausted without exhausting the reader also; and it may well be we have too many anthologies in England, without this garland of poppies. So let it be printed at a castle in Spain.

Here, however, is one last fragment from that opiate work: 'Silence, it has been said, though so honoured of the poets, had never a priest. But those who are versed in the myths of Atlantis tell that she was once worshipped there. Her temple stood, they say, deep in a windless valley with the hush of a cypress-wood behind it, and a waveless lake before, in whose still depths moved the mute shadows of her sacred fish. They were the only life there—they, and the bright-eyed mice that peeped

from the corners of her marble precinct in the drowsy afternoons, the bats that circled round it as evening fell, the priesthood in white, unrustling robes and felt-soled sandals that bowed before the goddess in the grey of dawn. On her altar burnt no sacrifice, only a perpetual and uncrackling flame. Behind was enthroned the statue of the goddess carved in white marble; her face resting on one hand laid across her lips, and full of that strange calm which lives in the looks of those who hear no longer the noises of the world. Beneath her feet was carved a frieze of those lesser gods, whose reign she has preceded and will hereafter close: on either side of her, like watchdogs, a couchant sphinx; in the empty courts about her nodding hemlock and poppies left unmown. But her worship, though not her kingdom, perished with Atlantis: above her last temple lies now, as the fiery dust above Pompeii, the silence of the sunless depths of sea.'

G. M. YOUNG

ENGLAND IN DECLINE

The History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century: Epilogue, Vol. I, 1895-1905, by Elie Halévy (Benn. 15s.). M. Halévy's great work is slowly advancing. He has now covered in three substantial volumes the period from Waterloo to the fall of the Whigs in 1841. From that point he has gone straight to the Epilogue. If ever the book is finished, and on M. Halévy's scale it will take another six volumes at least, there can be little doubt that it will rank as one of the few great histories of modern times. Of the translation, one can only say that Mr. Watkins's English reads like an original.

As a rule the standard of general information among Frenchmen is so low that a Frenchman who can distinguish between the Lord Chamberlain and Sir Joseph, or can spell the Isle of Wight correctly, acquires thereby a certain standing as an authority. M. Halévy moves on a very different level. As was said of another French historian: 'his inimitable accuracy almost assumes the character of genius', and with a truly immense command of detail he unites an admirable gift of disposition and narrative. He is austere, but not frigidly, objective, and for the complete assurance of the reader he sets out the moral, or thesis, of his book separately in three pages of introduction. There are the facts, and here, cautiously advanced, is his finding on the facts.

To M. Halévy the Victorian age proper, that is the fifty years from the Repeal of the Corn Laws, is 'the culmination or one of the culminations of British culture'.

How, then, is he to describe the ten years that followed? He hesitates to speak either of decadence or senescence. Yet he hints that either term might fit. His heart, I think, is with the Radicals and Evangelicals of an earlier age. In their company he has traced the fortunes of the English people through its stormy morning to the serene and splendid noon of mid-Victorian prosperity. From the 'seventies to the 'nineties the descent is steep. The England of M. Halévy's epilogue is tired, fretful and nervous. Genius, self-confidence, the appetite for work, and the zeal for production are flagging. The age of the great industrial scientists had closed: none of the great inventions of the period can be claimed for England: science and industry had fallen apart. 'It was becoming possible to calculate with almost mathematical certainty the day when England would be overtaken by America and Germany.'

The immediate reaction to this prospect was Imperialism and Protection. M. Halévy's analysis of the Imperialist movement is judicial but slightly acidulated—it might have been headed 'The Dream and the Business'; and he does not conceal his opinion that the business end was unsavoury. He quotes with intention the warning of the *Economist* in 1899 that the connection between finance and legislation was becoming closer than was desirable or even safe, and with relish a description of Rand society: 'Monte Carlo on top, Sodom and Gomorrah below'. The foreign policy of the Conservative Government appears in his pages as a flurried search for friends in a universally hostile world.

Seen in retrospect, it is clear that the imperialism of the 'nineties was not a new direction of the English mind, but a passing extroversion. It was not inconceivable that the

diminishing vitality of English trade and manufacture might be compensated by expansion and organization overseas. But no amount of expansion and organization could improve the individual quality of English life, which was the increasing preoccupation of the thoughtful classes. The early Victorians had promised a steady amelioration of life, in accordance with their own ideals. By the end of the century the amelioration had been very imperfectly achieved and the ideals were antiquated. Intellectually, the late Victorian age was without guidance except what evolution provided. Politically, though Benthamism was confuted in theory and discredited in practice, no comparable body of doctrine had been accepted in its place. And Evangelicalism, which had made up one-half of the middle-class philosophy of life as the Wage Fund Theory made up the other, had foundered on the *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*.

What followed, as M. Halévy points out, was the rise of Socialism and Anglo-Catholicism, and both of them are, to him, symptoms of decadence, of the prudence and weariness of age.

He leaves it to the reader 'to decide how far the progress of this Catholic movement should be considered as a phenomenon of senescence fostered by the panic which dare not face the difficulties of inquiry and the dangers of doubt, by moral weariness and intellectual timidity'. On the other half of his thesis, he is more definite: he undertakes 'to show that in spite of all claims to the contrary, the spirit which inspires what we may term in the most general sense Socialism is opposed to the spirit of production.'

I think both these judgements could be challenged. As regards the religious evolution of the period, M. Halévy's

view seems to me to be unsupported by either the facts or the dates. The existence of a panic can usually be determined by the persecution which it excites. There has been very little persecution, whether legal or social, of inquiry since the 'sixties, and in the 'sixties it is not unfair to speak of panic. The truth seems rather to be that after the great controversies of the middle of the century had died down, the English mind came to rest in a state of inquiring scepticism. Earlier there had undoubtedly been a rush to dogma as a relief from doubt. But when doubt on both sides was accepted as permissible and realized to be inevitable, dogma lost its attraction, and the progress of inquiry was resumed. Whatever conclusion may be drawn from the fact, it is a fact that the advance of Anglo-Catholicism has kept pace with an activity in Anglican scholarship without parallel since the seventeenth century. When, therefore, M. Halévy asks whether it is not to be accounted for by 'intellectual timidity', I cannot help wondering whether for once the 'difficulties of inquiry' have not been too much for him.

His categorical judgement on Socialism is of more serious import. It is, no doubt, in part a question of words and names, of what M. Halévy means by production and what he means by Socialism. If he were a writer of slogans, his meaning would be obvious and his opinion could be ignored. But he is a philosopher and a scholar, and I find it very difficult to form any idea of production that will hold water logically, and any idea of Socialism that will hold water historically, from which it can be deduced that the spirit of Socialism between 1895 and 1914, or at any other time, was hostile to the spirit of production. If he were an Englishman I should suspect that he was

suffering from the commonest malady of our race, an undistributed middle:

All Trade Unions restrict Output.

All Trade Unions are Socialist.

Therefore, Socialism restricts production.

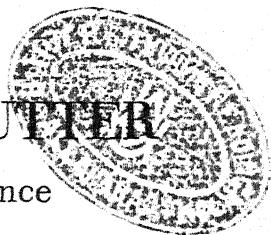
But do they really reason like that in the University of Abelard?

M. Halévy writes as if Socialism were a specific product of the 'eighties and 'nineties. In fact, it was rather the articulation of a drift of mind which set in about 1850, but remained nothing more than a drift until the Fabians undertook to plot its direction and indicate its objective. And by then, in the period of which M. Halévy is writing, half their work had been done for them by the operation of previous causes. For one thing, the country had acquired an administrative equipment and the capacity of administration to solve problems, which the early Victorians had perforce to leave to Providence, had been abundantly proved. What was more important, the revaluation of ideals, the conversion from quantitative to qualitative standards, which became possible in the 'fifties when the educated classes broke away from their enforced alliance with the bourgeoisie, had become inevitable in the 'nineties when the bourgeoisie was obviously failing at its own job. It is characteristic of M. Halévy's severely intellectual outlook that he has not endeavoured to assess the influence of this subtle atmospheric change. He can allow for Darwin but Ruskin escapes him.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

THE
MARK ON THE SHUTTER

Or, A Small Boy's Conscience



It was mid-winter term at Lentfield House and a Saturday morning. The sky had at last cleared after a three-days storm, during which strong winds had flung the rain against its sea-ward windows. Football had been impossible. The school was in that state of nerves which results from keeping boys boxed up together; the silly were at their silliest, those who took pleasure in teasing were at their worst, and the bored were so exasperated by the few who wanted to read that the latter had no peace. Collectors of stamps, shells, skins, crests, picture postcards, who had looked forward to arranging their collections and perhaps doing a little 'swapping', found it risky to expose their treasures. At any moment anything was liable to be snatched by a bored marauder who would either hold it up to public auction by shouting 'Quis?' or dash away with it in the hope of being pursued; leaving the unhappy owner torn between the desire to recover his property and a dread of leaving the rest of his treasures unprotected. One little boy had taken nearly two days to finish a tear-stained letter home—it had been 'bagged' so many times. Once to his agony a passage had been read aloud; but this had been instantly stopped. It had been voted 'not funny', but 'caddish'. After that 'Swotty' was allowed to finish in peace his interminable letter.

He was the most pestered and unpopular boy in the school. He was miserably short-sighted and he was accused of smelling; a charge for which there was some foundation. He was one of those little boys who learn late how to wash; there was always orange-coloured wax in his pale ears and stale grime behind them. Moreover, he was not nice-natured, and his school-fellows instinctively felt this. There was a cringing cheekiness in him which froze pity, even in those who thought that his persecutors went too far; and if any one did stick up for him, his familiarity became offensive. Freddy Somercote ('Coat' or 'Goat' for short) had suffered from this. He hated the sight of Swotty's misery, and he had sometimes shielded him; but his own popularity was precarious and during these last wet days it had sunk alarmingly low. He had for some time past been aware that a set was being made against him, and to his dismay he had discovered that he was now charged with 'swaggering'. He had even found jeering notes addressed to 'The Duke of Lentfield' in his locker, which he had opened carefully, read, and then fastened up again, so that his enemies should not have the satisfaction of knowing that he had read them. But they had caused him some pain and more uneasiness.

Much was going on inside him. He had been deeply impressed by the Head Master's sermons; he had 'found religion'. What high, sad, splendid future lay in front of him he did not know, but this he did know, that from now onwards he must be heroically good. One of those wet afternoons (the library was a bear-garden, of course) he had spent in his dormitory reading the Bible. But to go there during the day was strictly forbidden, and when discovered he had concealed his employment. He had been given a long punishment. This had provoked in him

no resentment, only an exquisitely patient sense of being misunderstood.

That seriousness which had lately made life grave and beautiful to him had, no doubt, reflected itself in that change of manner which others interpreted as condescension. The change had been all the more noticeable because up till then he had been a droll, vivacious little boy. Thus, at a time when he was longing to love everyone and make his friendships better and better, he found them all beginning to dislike him. Still, he had the Head Master; the Head Master whose exhortations had so profoundly affected him.

The Rev. Walter Orum, Head Master of Lentfield School, was not only a fine scholar but a splendid actor. His voice and features could express not only the sternest resentment but every shade of tender approval. He had no idea himself of the weight of his glare, or of the heart-shaking power of his voice, otherwise he would not have used them so often. Indeed, the last thing he wished—except of course when his boys did something really wrong—was that they should be afraid of him. In goodness and refinement he was superior to people most of the boys saw at home, including their parents; sensitive boys felt this without exactly making comparisons. And while this made it thrilling to please him, it also made those moments more awful when suddenly the smile was struck from his face, and such expressions as ‘shuffler’, ‘wretched ignoramus’, ‘unhappy boy’, shot from his lips, accompanied by a gesture of contempt which would have made his fortune on the stage. The boys had no notion that shortly after such scenes he would be laughing over them with his staff; and he, on his side, had

no idea of the profound admiration he had inspired in at least one of his pupils.

Shortly before the lunch hour an order was received in each classroom, that the boys, instead of going straight to lunch, were to assemble in the Big Playroom; and when it was read out, many looked up from their work uneasily. Yet such an order did not necessarily mean trouble. It might even betoken something pleasant. A dead whale, for instance, had been washed up some miles farther down the coast. Perhaps the school was going to be taken to see it? All would depend on the way the Head began to speak, and it was no use worrying till that moment came. But everybody, from the captain of the school, who was over fourteen, to the youngest, who was not yet nine, knew from experience that if the Head's first words were, 'I have to make a statement', then the worst might be expected; a 'row' of some sort or size was certainly brewing.

The Big Playroom, at the end of which stood a stage used for concerts, lectures and entertainments, filled quickly, and the hum of forty little boys' chattering arose. What was up? Could it be the whale? Perhaps the smuggling trade in chocolate and acid-drops, carried on through a well-bribed boot-boy, had been discovered? Awful thought! That would be a row of huge dimensions, for nearly a quarter of the school was involved. The guilty tried to derive some comfort from their numbers: 'I'll own up if you will', 'I bet that little beast Binker won't', 'Oh, won't he! I bet I'll make him', '*Cave!* Old Orum!'

The door was flung violently open and the Head, his black gown flying, strode towards the platform. There was a sudden hush. Leaning against a wing of disused

scenery with a careless elegance which contrasted with the gravity of his face, he pronounced the ominous words, 'I have to make a statement.'

There was a short pause before he proceeded, when he began, so to speak, with first principles.

'You are gentlemen and the sons of gentlemen.' (At this pronouncement every heart sank.) 'It is on that supposition this school, *our* school, is carried on. We have no machinery of discipline—I would scorn to use it—of punishing any boy who does not possess some of the rudimentary instincts of a gentleman. If there are *cads* among us, let them—go.'

'I will not labour a definition of the type of mean undesirable person who is thus curtly and adequately described. It is sufficient to remind you that he is known by his boorishness, his want of respect for the feelings and property of others, and a complete lack of gratitude. His nature is often betrayed by his dirty habit of defacing public monuments and things of beauty with disgusting scribblings or his own ignoble name. If the ocular evidence before me that such a one is indeed among us, were of the *latter* kind,' (here he paused and added with a concentrated vigour that Chatham or Gladstone might have envied), 'I should then know with whom I had to deal. As it is, the offence is anonymous.'

'It has been almost a matter of pride to me that your surroundings here should not be quite unworthy of your own homes. For the forethought and expense involved, I should not think of asking gratitude; I prefer that such things should be taken for granted between us. But *some* respect for my property, such as a host expects from his guests, I am at least entitled to demand. You must all have noticed at the beginning of term that the library

had been repainted and decorated—for you. The shutters of the window nearest the door' (at these words Freddy Somercote experienced midriff-anguish) 'have been foully defaced. The precise nature of the drawing, or inscription, is no longer decipherable.' (Freddy remembered with horror having given a lecture on physiology, the fruit of holiday reading, and having illustrated it by a diagram on a shutter); 'but there are indications that it was of a nature to inspire, even in *that* boy, some sense of shame, for he has clumsily obliterated it. If I am right in supposing that he is capable of shame, he will now stand up; otherwise'—and his voice became disquietingly matter of fact—'there will be no half-holiday this afternoon.'

Suddenly Freddy was aware that he was on his feet. In his ears there was a rustle, like a vast composite sigh of relief, and the Rev. Walter Oram had apparently exhausted his oratorical indignation: 'I am at least glad . . .', he began almost mildly—then, apparently changing his mind, he descended quickly, and as he passed Freddy he turned towards him a face in which disgust and grief magnificently contended: '*You!*' he said, 'I was never more surprised in my life.' He could have hardly devised a more acute, instantaneous punishment; Freddy's self-respect crumbled.

As soon as the door closed a hubbub of relief broke out. There remained half an hour before lunch, and everyone rushed to the library to see with his own eyes the desecration. Freddy had some difficulty in edging through the crowd of boys round the window. Yes, there it was, his diagram, still, in spite of having been scraped away by a pocket-knife, intelligible to any one who had followed the lecture. But—something struck him—Had it not been the

shutter *nearest* the door that 'the statement' had been about? And was not his diagram on the shutter of the third window, *farthest* from the door? Another group was gathered at that first window; they, too, were examining a similar but smaller diagram. Well, if that was the one which the row was about he had not drawn it! He explained the facts excitedly to those nearest him and dashed from the room; relief filled his breast, he could put himself right with the Head, now—at once.

He knocked at the study and entered: 'Sir,' he panted, 'I've seen that mark on the shutter. I didn't do it after all.' The Rev. Walter Oram slowly lowered his *Times*, and like Sol emerging from a cloud his countenance gradually shone upon the little boy. 'I knew it,' he said affectionately, 'I knew there must be some mistake.' With the radiant happiness of the freshly shriven, Freddy skipped back to the library and announced what he had done. There his happiness found no reflection. His information was glumly received. Everyone recognized his perfect right to retract his confession, since his own crime, though exactly similar, had not yet been discovered. But then, what about the half-holiday? Unless the culprit was found and forced to confess before two-thirty, they would all be marched into class after lunch. Groups instantly formed to discuss who could be guilty, and the idea spread that it must be Swotty. It was only a suspicion but it was something to go upon, and the longer it was entertained the more reliable it seemed to become; and what one boy in particular said, almost strengthened it to a certainty. He was a simple straightforward boy whom everybody called 'Oats': 'I'm sure,' he said, 'I saw some fellow sitting in that window the first evening, drawing on the shutter.' There were cries

of 'What was he like?' 'I think,' was the reply, 'he was small and had dark hair.' Now half the school was small and had dark hair, but the description fitted Swotty. On Freddy, however, his words had a very different effect. For the fraction of a second, rapid as the blink of a kodak, he too, saw that boy—and it was himself! The flash of certainty was gone again like lightning, but it had been. In a desperate flurry he began rummaging among his memories of that first evening, but he could recall nothing which linked on to such an action. The physiology lecture, delivered some time later, he remembered perfectly; he could even repeat it now. But when and why had he drawn a picture of human organs for himself? The moment he compared his other memories with that instantaneous sensation provoked by those words he was no longer sure that such a thing had ever happened.

He could not recapture that flash of certainty, but it had left behind something as disturbing as itself, the feeling that he *had* been certain. Though he did not know it, what was really preventing him from recapturing it was the obligation on his conscience to go again to the study. To go in and say: 'Please sir, I've made another mistake, I did do it'—that was impossible. He did not admit to himself that it was impossible, any more than he said to himself that he did *not* remember; but he said to himself that he knew Swotty had not done it.

And where was Swotty? In spite of the failure of the group round the reliable Oats urging him to say that the boy he saw wore spectacles, that suspicion was hardening; the discovery of Swotty's absence confirmed it. Of course it was a guilty conscience that had prevented his rushing to look at the mark on the shutter like everybody else! They did not remember that it was one of Swotty's

cautious customs to slip into the dining-room last of all, as a precaution against playful, if not painful, kicks; and that he never foregathered in the library. Where was Swotty? Two ardent servants of justice were just starting in search of him, when the gong roared, and the whole school, still simmering with indignation, trooped in to lunch. As the Head rose to say grace, Swotty slid quietly into his place.

The meal was a gloomy one, the elder boys ate ferociously and in silence. It ended with another brief statement from the Head: since it had turned out that Freddy Somercote had been mistaken in thinking that he was responsible for the damage, and no one else had come forward, the afternoon would be spent as though it were a whole school day. They would be expected to be in their form-places at half-past two. He was glad to think that there was at any rate one boy in the school who had the manliness to own up when he thought he was in fault, and he pitied from the bottom of his heart the coward who had preferred that all should suffer rather than that he himself should run risk of punishment. All eyes were fixed on the unconscious Swotty, and for the first time the Head Master's praise failed to make Freddy happy.

They all trooped out, towards the Big Playroom, Freddy among them in a daze. He was roused out of it by the sound of a squeal; Swotty had been cornered against one of the walls. His clever little spectacled face was festered with anxiety and spite: 'I didn't, I didn't,' he kept screaming, 'and I won't.' Freddy pushed his way through the others, saying that there was no proof and that it was a beastly shame. There were answering cries of 'He *did* do it.' 'Oats *said* he saw him, the little sneak,'

'He must own up,' 'We're going to build a Tower of Babel on him.'

'The Tower of Babel' was a sort of 'ordeal by pressure' the victim having been knocked down, the rest then threw themselves on top of each other across his body. It was really more terrifying than painful, for the bottom boy, save for anguish of mind, suffered almost as much as the victim himself, and soon holloed out, when the 'Tower' at once went to pieces amid shouts of laughter.

Freddy succeeded in turning the attention from Swotty to an argument about him. Oats was summoned, and the discussion was becoming animated when Swotty, who was an adept at such manoeuvres, made a sudden dive for the door of the lavatories and reached it; from that place he did not emerge until school had begun. A punishment for being late was a trifle to Swotty, who could not resist cocking a snook at Freddy as he settled into his place beside him. Freddy was beyond resentment, and used most of the hour in wracking his brains to discover a way of protecting the poor wretch during the break between schools. He was given two bad marks for inattention. Finally, he scribbled on blotting-paper that it would be as well to ask 'to leave the room' just before the hour came to an end. 'P'raps and p'raps not,' Swotty sniggered. However, he took the hint, and the future Colonial Governor spent the next hour in his favourite resort.

By five o'clock the school, with the practical stoicism of boys, had ceased to resent the inevitable: it was a whole school day like any other, that was all, and its unusualness was forgotten. To Freddy, the afternoon and evening passed slowly and he was dreading the night. The persecution of Swotty had had the effect of removing

every shadow of doubt from his mind that he was also the maker of the second mark on the shutter, and he dreaded lying awake in the dark a prey to conscience. But oddly enough he fell asleep instantly, and when he woke the next morning the incidents of the day before seemed to have happened long ago. He merely felt depressed and slack.

Though he had not really forgotten them, it was his body that remembered them best; he felt very tired. He tried to work, but his work though painstaking was full of mistakes from that day onwards. He grew hardly to care whether his school-fellows were friendly or not, and, from having been one who 'counted' in the school, he slipped into being a mere nonentity. His shining dramatic inner life also stopped. The lights were turned down in the theatre of his soul which was covered over with dust sheets, and he could no longer imagine himself in the divine limelight.

One morning during construing he had a violent fit of coughing, at the end of which he found it difficult to recover his breath. In his effort to do so he was aware that he was making an odd crowing noise; then, without feeling in the least squeamish, he was suddenly sick. 'Old Orum' looked up over his spectacles with an expression of mild concern: 'Young man, you've got the whooping-cough. Go to Miss Tay.' The black-board duster was thrown over the mess he had made, and the lesson continued. Freddy went to the matron, who took a half-amused professional 'tut-tut-tut' view of his misfortune. This was the beginning of six weeks' segregation. It was a considerable comfort to be made rather a fuss of. Afterwards from time to time a fellow 'whooper' joined him joyfully in the Sanitorium. They were not boys he particu-

larly liked, but it was not a bad life; one could read stories and play chess and cards, and then one's people sent one grapes and good things to eat. It was even rather fun being sick without feeling sick, and exaggerating crowings over the basin. As soon as he was no longer infectious he was sent home, and it was during the holidays that he made his resolve.

It became clear to him that he must confess. He knew this was necessary because the moment he had made that resolve the lights in his soul were turned up, and he became again interested in himself. But it did not seem so easy to do when the holidays were over and he found himself back again at Lentfield House. To begin with, he discovered he was enjoying the term thoroughly. The charges of 'swaggering' had blown over, and having made a one-handed catch in the slips at a critical juncture in a match against another school and also taken two wickets in one over, his status was most honourable. Then, summer itself had a debilitating effect on his conscience. When the sky is blue and the evenings are delicious, it seems nonsensical to do anything to make oneself unhappy. Even Swotty was benefitting from the balmy weather, and a passing kick with the flat of the foot was all he had to complain of.

It is true, Freddy had every now and then a feeling that he was enjoying his prestige with masters and boys on false pretences, but this only bothered him intermittently. What was more serious was that he could not help noticing that his beautiful serious moments, when they did occur, were always somehow mixed up with his obligation. While enjoying the moonlit garden from the dormitory window, he would suddenly think of that; and he could not even read a life of the Duke of Wellington,

at least with any genuine hope of emulating that hero, without being reminded of what was in front of him. And although his religious meditations were now vivid again, whenever he withdrew into himself, a Divine face always seemed bending above him with an expression of expectant, if merciful, concern. Night after night he attempted after school prayers to say the decisive words: 'May I speak to you, sir, in the study?'; again and again he came near to saying it, but invariably the Head Master's smile and the kind pressure of his hand defeated him. At last one night—it was the night on which the boys were always asked to contribute to Dr. Barnardo's Home ('the forced loan' as those who remembered their history rather pointedly called it)—he plucked up courage. His own subscription had literally been 'a widow's mite' and a handsome one at that, twenty-three shillings—all he possessed. His generosity produced such an inward sense of joy in him, and of faith in his own goodness, that after prayers the request to speak to the Head Master slipped out almost unconsciously.

But the moment he was in the study he began to cry and tremble. The Head was sitting in his chair reading *The Times*—just as he had been sitting that fatal morning the term before; again he lowered his paper.

When he saw the state the little boy was in, he drew him affectionately to his side and put his cheek against his head; but at this, Freddy's sobs shook him worse than ever, and it was some time before he could jerk out the words: 'I made—the mark—on the shutter.' 'A mark on a shutter? Well, dear child, that isn't a very dreadful thing to do. Show it me to-morrow if you like.'

'Oh, but *I* did it—after all,' sobbed Freddy. That smiling face so near him shone, for Freddy, with such

divine radiance—and it was no longer expectant but triumphant—that he did not perceive what any other person would have seen, that its expression was, if very kind, also very blank. Freddy ran upstairs to the dormitory still crying, but with the heart of a bird.

To confess also to the leaders of the school was comparatively easy. But these confessions fell very flat. They had to be gone through, but there was no exhilaration after them. The Captain of the eleven, for instance, kept tossing up and catching a cricket ball all the time, and at the end of Freddy's story merely remarked: 'Oh, I thought Swotty did it. Who do you think I ought to put in fourth wicket, Oats?'

Freddy learnt at the time, or thought he had learnt, nothing from all he had been through; but in later life when, either for fun or from curiosity, he would sometimes travel back into the past, he found his experiences had taught him three things: that a good conscience is a very private source of happiness in which others can never be much interested; that people have short memories, even for what they once thought important; and that the outraged moral sense of a community is in proportion to the inconvenience suffered at the moment from the delinquent. And when, afterwards, he was sometimes rather surprised to find himself chilled, rather than excited, by public outbursts of moral indignation, he would say to himself: 'Ah, yes! of course—the mark on the shutter.'

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of *Life and Letters*.

Dear Sir,

June 27th, 1929.

In connection with Mr. Oliver Brett's interesting and informative article on modern first editions in your June issue, I wonder whether you would allow me to correct the now generally accepted and entirely baseless myth that copies of *South Wind* with the transposed lines on p. 335 constitute the first issue.

My attention was first drawn to this aberration, some years after the original publication of the book, by a north of England antiquarian bookseller, under a pledge of secrecy. It was a complete surprise to me, and I found on investigation that the variation did not exist in any of the copies of the first edition of the book to which I was able to refer. I subsequently wrote to the printers, Messrs. William Brendon & Son, Plymouth, to ask if they could throw any light on the matter, but Mr. Charles Brendon, who has printed books for me for nineteen years, was as puzzled as I was, especially since a reference to the press-proofs showed the lines in their proper sequence. Obviously, during the printing of that particular signature, the run was interrupted for some reason or another, and in replacing the formes, these two lines must have slipped and have been replaced in wrong order. There is nothing, however, to show that these erroneously-printed copies constituted the 'first issue', and I have no hesitation in describing such copies as typographical curiosities, and nothing more. I am sorry to explode the bubble, but in view of the fact that one of these copies fetched, as I am told, £38 in the auction room last week, I feel that it is high time that the facts were publicly and authoritatively stated, so that people may know exactly what they are buying.

However, the fortunate possessors of the first edition of this book in any form have an item of real scarcity value; only 1,000 copies were printed, of which 500 bore Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co.'s imprint and were immediately shipped to New York, the remaining 500 for England being bound up in one lot, thus constituting the 'first issue'. Of the 500 English copies it is reasonable to suppose that at least 250 passed into the circulating libraries and were subsequently re-bound by them, so that, allowing for a certain inevitable wastage, I cannot believe that more than 200 perfect copies exist at the present time.

Yours faithfully,

MARTIN SECKER

READERS' REPORTS

NEW NOVELS

No matter how small the value which is ultimately attached to his work, M. André Gide is a novelist whom the student of thought and feeling will certainly be ill-advised to pass by. He epitomizes many of our virtues and our weaknesses, defects and qualities otherwise hard to capture. And, supposing that after half a century, survivors of those remarkable and disappointing years which followed the Great War, we try to explain to our descendants exactly in what consisted the charm and the despair of our forgotten heyday, we may do worse than refer them to *Les Faux-Monnayeurs*—that extraordinary, delightful, intensely exasperating book, expressive alike of the sensibility we recognize in ourselves and the mawkish *sensiblerie* which we notice in our friends. For it would be difficult, unless we go back as far as Rousseau, to find any book which combined an equal degree of penetration with such an exuberant outpouring of nonsense. The novelist can be almost brutally shrewd; and, again, he will introduce us to the character who, having playfully locked a companion into his sister's bedroom, rushes in to interrupt their slumber, discovers a blood-stained handkerchief under the pillow, drops onto his knees and bursts into a passion of weeping, while the narrative dissolves in a blur of indefinable moral exaltation. It is Gide the Moralist, not the earlier *Immoraliste*, who is repulsive and disturbing—the tormented Protestant, not the aspiring voluptuary of *Si le grain ne meurt*, who gives his narrative its jerky measure, whose influence is continually breaking up the calm framework of his

stories. Still, his moral *malaise* is least blatant where it is most obviously expressed; nothing could be so enervating as the extreme chastity of *La Porte Étroite*. In his new novel, *L'École des Femmes* (N. R. F. Gallimard. 12 francs.), M. Gide is once more cocking a salacious eye under the immaculate starched coif of a Little Sister of St. Francis.

'Mon Dieu,' bleats his heroine, characteristically named Éveline D—, 'ne me forcez pas à désobéir à papa. Vous savez que c'est Robert que j'aime. . . .' But Robert, with his spiritual adviser and his literary review, the sort of young Frenchman who would be reading and talking of Maritain if he were alive to-day, turns out to be a complete fraud. Written in journal form and divided into two parts with an interval of twenty years between, the novel describes Éveline's slow disillusionment, wittily forecast in several acute satirical touches while their relationship is yet at a very early stage. Twenty years pass! The devoted mother and obedient wife has now reached the end of her patience; her son is taking after his father; her daughter shocks her by putting into words all she herself thinks and has never dared to say. Robert groans, clasps his head in his hands: 'Ma femme ne m'aime plus! ma femme ne m'aime plus!' Éveline goes off to die a glorious death in a hospital for contagious diseases; her daughter, Geneviève D— (ne cherchez pas à me connaître, etc.), sends a typewritten copy of her intimate journal to M. Gide. It is a neatly constructed little story, and justly observed as far as it goes, but rather vacuous and extraordinarily hard to read. It is like one of those elaborately under-furnished modern rooms, which make us regret the sumptuous and overcrowded apartments of our predecessors.

Among novels which have lately been published in

England, the most interesting are all by American authors. For instance, there is *Paterfamilias* by W. B. Trites, author of *The Gipsy* and *Ask the Young* (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.), the story of a struggling general practitioner in an American state, an agreeably unpretending book, relieved by a kind of sub-acid wit, and told and felt so discreetly as to raise it a long way above the ordinary ruck of current novels. *In Abraham's Bosom* (Allen & Unwin. 5s.) is another book I should recommend. It is by Paul Green, the author of that memorable collection of short stories, *Wide Fields*. This book, too, 'the Biography of a Negro in Seven Scenes', deals with South Carolina and shows the same rare skill in distilling the dramatic richness of the local jargon.

Little Caesar, by W. R. Burnett (Cape. 7s. 6d.), describes a very different but no less romantic locality. Rico is the underworld dictator of a Chicago gang. He rewards, legislates, dispenses death; finally, Hubris overtakes him. The whole narrative is as baldly and directly written as any adventure story, but it avoids the redundant, and is moving and entertaining as professed 'thrillers' very seldom are. And what material—the thugs and sneak-thieves visited by press-photographers at their banquet; the dazed and sheepish Italian emigrants who have shed their fleecy clothing to become the bullies and 'killers' of this trans-Atlantic jungle! Mr. Burnett's novel is well, though plainly, constructed. It gives one a hope that, after the Wilders and the Cathers have sunk into the oblivion they deserve, something veritably original may yet come out of America.

In *The Wave* (Cape. 15s.), Miss Evelyn Scott has certainly done what she can. Her long novel is concerned with the American Civil War, and attempts a vast historical

panorama by means of brief 'episodic' glimpses. In themselves, Miss Scott's episodes—a business man knocked over in a street row by Northern troops, soldiers marching in the heat of the day, ladies rolling bandages behind the lines—are often extremely vivid, but they do not build up into the general impression which she is presumably striving for. As an historical novel, her book is a failure; as a failure though, it is gallant and encouraging.

P. Q.

WHAT NEXT FOR DETECTIVES?

There really is an unconscionable number of detective stories nowadays. It is true that this is only a comparatively recent phenomenon. Millions now living, as Pastor Russell would say, can recollect the times when the seeker after detective fiction had to go on reading and re-reading Conan Doyle and Gaboriau, with, for a change, such pale and antiquarian efforts as *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*. Now there are many rivals, and the Oxford don need no longer consume his crime in secret, but may boldly ask for a detective novel at the bookstall, feeling certain that he will be offered a choice of at least half a dozen. And with the increased supply, the general level of technique has undoubtedly risen, as in the parallel case of magazine illustration. The technique of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* would no more satisfy the modern reader than the illustrations with which the early numbers of the *Strand Magazine* were adorned would quiet his artistic scruples. Of course, there is still an immense amount of miserably bad illustration and rotten detective fiction; but the top-rank practitioners in both these crafts are now, on the whole, very competent.

But it is a question whether technique can be im-

proved beyond a certain limit, and, as Father Knox remarks, in his introduction to *The Best Detective Stories of the Year 1928* (Faber & Faber. 7s. 6d.), there is a very serious and growing difficulty, for the author, of finding ways in which he can deceive his reader without either breaking the rules, or using gambits which have been used *ad nauseam* before. 'The stories become cleverer and cleverer, but the readers are becoming cleverer and cleverer too; it is almost impossible nowadays to think out any system of bluff which the seasoned reader will not see through.' (The whole of Father Knox's introduction, with its ten commandments for aspiring novelists, including the very wise one that 'No Chinaman must figure in the story', is both amusing and otherwise worth reading; but it is not uninteresting to note that several of the stories in his selection break one or more of his commandments, and at least five are not detective stories at all. Otherwise they are not at all bad. Mr. K. R. G. Browne's *Through the Window* is very neat, and to be specially commended. So is Mrs. Christie's *The Tuesday Night Club*, of which more hereafter; and Mr. Kelman Frost is very competent, and M. Leblanc somewhat surprisingly amusing.)

Returning, however, to the subject of technique, it appears that there are two directions in which the intelligent novelist is at present trying to develop, apart altogether from such strictly personal triumphs as those of Mr. Austin Freeman. For let not the ordinary writer think that by industriously looking up chemical facts in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* he will be enabled to rival Dr. Thorndyke. He will not—*experto crede*: he will make fourth-form howlers, and the last state of his plot will be far worse than the first. The two ways, however, in which

he may try to develop are these: he may make experiments with the telling of his plot, tell it backwards, or sideways, or in bits; or he may try to develop character and atmosphere. Of these, the second demands more of the gifts of the novelist proper (which not all who can invent plots possess), and carries with it the risk that the characters may rise and destroy the plot; while the first demands skill and a cool head—so as not to leave the ends of the plot untied—and also requires, I think, a certain light-heartedness in carrying it out. Portentiousness, in this line, is to be avoided like the plague—and has been successfully avoided by Mr. Anthony Berkeley in *The Poisoned Chocolates Case* (Collins. 7s. 6d.). Mr. Berkeley has written a very amusing book, in which he guys his fellow-practitioners much as Mr. Desmond Coke, in *The Bending of a Twig*, once guyed the writers of school-stories. In Mr. Berkeley's book there is no action; there is a crime, which has already taken place when the story opens, and there are six detectives sitting round a table, of whom each in turn 'reconstructs' the crime, and names the criminal—and six different persons are conclusively proved to have been guilty. Naturally, it is the fool of the party (*not* Roger Sheringham) who hits on the right solution, and I imagine Mr. Berkeley would be the first to admit that he learned that trick from *Trent's Last Case*, where it is most effectively employed, though he might have learned it also from Mrs. Christie's story, mentioned above. The repetition is, perhaps, a flaw, and a rather more serious flaw is that I do not for an instant believe in the final solution itself. But the book is very amusing; the six practitioners are sketched in with gentle and pleasant irony; and the reader will wish it were longer.

This month's example of the second expedient is *The Man Who Killed Fortescue*, by John Stephen Strange (Collins. 7s. 6d.). This is a very highly-coloured book; there are a lot of people about with dubious pasts, and they have nerve-storms and tremendous stresses of character, and the author has taken a deal of trouble with them—so much so that his plot rather escapes notice in the general turmoil. It is a clever book, but not a particularly good detective novel; Mr. Strange really takes his people rather too seriously for this type of fiction, and people who are taken seriously in modern novels are always so very unpleasant. However, it is distinctly above the average.

Menace to Mrs. Kershaw, by Austin Allen (Geoffrey Bles. 7s. 6d.), is original both in its treatment and in its characters. Were there in this country a Crime Book of the Month Club (and, perhaps, one may have been imported by the time these notes appear), this book would certainly be a candidate. It contains two detectives, one of whom belongs to the police force, and investigates clues, etc., patiently on the spot, while the other, his friend, sits in her study and reconstructs part of the crime at intervals from such data as photographs and scraps of character supplied to her. The combination is a very happy one, and Mr. Allen to be congratulated on it. Furthermore, the character-drawing is really good, and the characters are not taken from the night-club and country-house sets in which intellectual detective novelists seem so unfortunately at home, but from butchers and gardeners, among whom, if statistics are any guide, murders do in fact occur with more frequency than among the intellectual classes. Finally, the actual method of death is the most original I have seen for some time.

It is connected with the purchase, by a butcher, of a flock of geese, eight swans, and some pike. I shall give no other clue.

Mr. Henry Wade's latest book, *The Duke of York's Steps* (Constable. 7s. 6d.), is, like all his work, rather heavy in the hand. The crime is cleverly worked, and holds the reader's attention, and there is a fair amount of character-drawing, though it is rather wooden at times. The book is an honest and careful piece of work, and may be generally recommended. I could wish, however, that Mr. Wade would curb his tendency to unnecessary description. One can stage a murder on the Duke of York's Steps without giving a topographical description of the West End, and one can introduce a heroine without cataloguing in detail her clothes and the plenishings of her room. It is not as though Mr. Wade had a sensuous Wildeian pleasure in stuffs; he is more like an auctioneer who cannot refrain from giving a brief description of every article he handles. But it is a trick which rapidly becomes tiresome.

Mr. Peter Oldfeld, on the other hand, in *The Alchemy Murder* (Constable. 7s. 6d.), registers a decline. *The Alchemy Murder*, like *The Death of a Diplomat*, is a shocker, but it is not so good a shocker. There are too many gangs about, and too many people jumping in and out of windows. It is brightly written, but the characters are stock, and it really might have been written by anybody. Mr. Oldfeld ought to do better.

There follows the ruck. Mr. Thomas Cobb, author of *The Crime Without a Clue* (Benn. 7s. 6d.), has already written thirty or so novels, and has presumably learned to spread his butter thin. At all events, it is here spread very thin indeed, so thin that many pages are barren of

print. And the crime is so thoroughly without a clue that the murderer has to confess, in order to prevent the wrong person from being arrested. This is surely overdoing it. *The Three Daggers*, by Cecil Freeman Gregg (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.), contains the champion bonehead among police detectives. His indiscretions were so many and so enormous that he heartily merited being killed at least three times by the murderer instead of being allowed to half-kill him in the police station—which is surely unusual, in this country at any rate. The book contains plenty of blood and thunder, and the heroine is slain. This, at least, is original. *The Ainceworth Mystery*, by Gregory Baxter (Benn. 7s. 6d.) is a very bad shocker. It contains unsuspected twin brothers, which is a trick that ought, from now onwards, to be avoided like the plague. *The Tapestry Room*, by Carolyn Wells (Lippincott. 7s. 6d.) is another Fleming Stone story, rather worse written than the last.

The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and His Reign. A study of tenth-century Byzantium, by Steven Runciman. (Cambridge University Press. 16s.). Despite the work of two generations of scholars, the Byzantine empire is still too often misjudged, and much of its history has yet to be rewritten. Mr. Runciman has worthily filled one important gap.

After a short account of the authorities, the book opens with a chapter on life at Byzantium in the tenth century. Much novelty could not be expected here, but one or two interesting points are made. Women and eunuchs are rescued from the slighting treatment to which they have been subjected by many writers. A society in which women received the same education as men was, perhaps, ahead of the nineteenth century, even though, in denying them active occupation, it fell short of the present day.

The importance of the eunuchs is rightly emphasized. Western Europe was passing under feudalism. Thanks to the eunuchs, Byzantium was able to maintain a real civil service—the greatest single human factor in her superiority over the barbarian, if virile, West.

Three more chapters deal with the legacy of problems which the Emperor Leo the Wise left unsolved behind him, and describe the troubled years 912–19 and the means by which Romanus rose and maintained himself in power. So far the story has been of subtle intrigue and dangerous weakness, under an incompetent drunkard and a succession of struggling regents. The next six chapters show what the empire could still achieve in diplomacy and war under a single able head.

The Bulgarian menace had yet to be dealt with. This was a threat of a kind to which the empire was new. Symeon the Bulgar was no ordinary savage. He desired neither to destroy nor merely to ravage the empire like his forerunners, the old Kakhans. He aimed at the throne itself. Romanus was no more than an Armenian usurper; where he had trod, Symeon could follow. As a modern Bulgarian has written (Bobčev, in the *Slavonic Review*, June, 1929): 'Simeon, who knew the true conditions at Byzantium and that the crown of the Emperor had been seized by more than one usurper, considered . . . that it morally belonged to him, and that he was justified in claiming the complete dignity and the title'. Romanus met this terrific threat with extraordinary patience and good sense; five times the Bulgars swept through Thrace practically unopposed. The policy of patience won; after Simeon's death Bulgaria sank back exhausted by her efforts. She was never to threaten Constantinople again.

Her collapse relieved the Byzantines of an enemy, but

it also deprived them of a buffer. Henceforward the empire was in direct contact with the dreaded people of the steppes—the Magyars, the Petchenegs, and the rising power of Rus. These were new perils, and to meet them new methods had to be devised. The credit for the elaborate and subtle system of resistance, which Constantine Porphyrogenitus has described, is due to the government of Romanus. Only when we survey the whole range of enemies which Byzantium had to meet can we appreciate the full measure of its achievement.

Chapter vii deals with the eastern frontier. To specialists this is, perhaps, the most valuable in the book. The sources are confused and thin. The fullest of the Armenian writers, John Catholicus, gives only two dates—one of them forty years out and ceases to write (924) before the most important period of the war has begun; the Arabs are liable to extraordinary lapses into the fantastic; the Greeks are full of gaps. Events so important as the fall of Erzerum (probably about 930) cannot be dated with certainty. Yet Mr. Runciman manages a task which has never been properly attempted before. He builds up from the fragments of evidence a consecutive account of the Arab raids and the Armenian wars, and so does full justice to one of the great recoveries of Byzantium under John Curcuas, one of her greatest generals. The background is filled in in the next chapter, where the appalling intricacies of Armenian history are disentangled and fitted into a coherent whole.

Italy can show no such record of success, but Byzantium remained the strongest single power in the peninsula. Her difficulties were enormous. Her Lombard subjects and vassals took their religion and culture from Rome; only the Hellenized natives and refugees of

Calabria and Otranto were genuinely loyal. The Saracen danger had kept the Lombards fitfully obedient; their crushing defeat at the Garigliano (915)—one of the tenth-century empire's greatest achievements—removed the chief motive which had kept the Lombards true. The rise of a strong power in Italy was bound, sooner or later, to draw these people away from the empire, to which they were no longer held by sentiment or interest. Yet, in the meantime, in the collapse of the Carolings and the mutual paralysis of the North Italian princes, Byzantium still filled the part of protector and overlord, the part which she seemed to have lost in 751. Her power rested upon a delicate balance, upon the absence of a German rival, upon the impotence and the divisions of the Alberics and the Berengars. But to have maintained it was no small thing. Seen in the light of this book, the policies of Rome and Ivrea and Pavia acquire a meaning; they are guided and influenced by the master diplomats of new Rome.

Across the Adriatic lay Illyricum, which was going through one of the formative periods in its history. The secular hostility of Serb to Bulgar, the attachment of Croatia to the Roman, of Serbia to the Cyrillic Church, date from this time. Though the imperial influence—outside Serbia—had sunk low, the history of these countries is of great interest. Their future was moulded by the momentous decisions and conflicts of these years.

A short chapter on the land laws of Romanus and the moving story of his fall complete the narrative, which is wound up by an epilogue on this great emperor's place in history.

There is little to criticize in so striking a piece of work, but sometimes conjectures are too confidently assumed

as certainties: for example, the connection of the Patriarch Nicholas with the Ducas plot rests on a strained hypothesis. There are one or two slips; the victory of the Lechfeld is attributed to *Henry* of Saxony; the martyrdom of Sambat of Armenia is dated 913 on pages 128 and 250, 912 on page 155. But these are trifling blemishes, while the evidence on which conjectures rest is always stated, if not always convincing.

Specialists will appreciate the author's wide learning and discriminating use of evidence. The ordinary reader cannot fail to be struck by the dramatic story of Romanus's ambition, and to be impressed by the greatness of that empire which withstood so many attacks and preserved, undamaged, the inheritance of Christian and Imperial Rome.

Victorian Working Women, 1831-1850, by Mrs. W. F. Neff (Allen & Unwin. 12s. 6d.). This is a study of the social background of the early Victorian age from a particular angle. What was the actual life of a factory woman, a dressmaker, a governess and, by contrast, of an unoccupied woman, in those years? What were the home and shop conditions, the hours, the wages? What was the effect of industrial life on health, morals and education? Mrs. Neff has gone for her material to two principal sources: the great series of official reports which, from 1832 onwards, save our ancestors from the reproach of indifference to the welfare of the poor, and the fiction in which the contents of these blue books were brought home to the reading public—*Sybil* and *Ruth* and many others unremembered, chief among them the works of Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna. It is a most interesting vein, and Mrs. Neff has worked it judiciously and thoroughly.

The result is a well-documented survey for students and a suggestive story for the general reader, enlivened with much shrewd comment by the way. I wish she would follow it up with an exploration of that unmapped territory, domestic service in the nineteenth century.

Mrs. Graham Wallas's six essays, *Before the Bluestockings* (*Allen & Unwin. 8s. 6d.*), take us back a hundred years and more, and into a different class. When Mrs. Carter had made female learning homely, and the novel in Miss Burney's hands had become decent, a woman of brains and character could without much difficulty make occupation for herself. But in Queen Anne's time the odds were heavily against her. Marriage was likely to be purgatory, but old maidhood was worse, and neither married nor unmarried could a woman, unless she was of rank to be above convention, use her mind freely. Lord Halifax can only recommend his daughter to catch at any innocent alleviation of her lot that passes: Damaris Masham, Locke's faithful ally, would have women 'improve their rational faculties', but warns them that ridicule and ostracism will be among the results. Elizabeth Elstob, for her day an excellent Anglo-Saxon scholar, found a kindly home with the Duchess of Portland: but Mary Astell's premature attempt to found a woman's college came to grief on an unexpected rock. The Queen was ready to find the money, but Bishop Burnet scented Popery; and the higher education of women was postponed for a hundred years. Mrs. Wallas's book is a curious and interesting cross-section through a state of society and mind which is becoming almost unimaginable to the civilized world. Which of our current conceptions will be equally unintelligible in 2129? It is not

so long ago since the argument 'If you give women the vote, you cannot keep them out of Parliament: would you like to see a woman in the Cabinet?' was accepted as unanswerable.

Peel and the Conservative Party, by G. Kitson Clark (Bell, 15s.). The history of England in the nineteenth century is being built up in monographs. Mr. Webster's *Castlereagh* restored a great figure to history: it required another war—and another peace—to reveal Castlereagh's true stature, after a century of misunderstanding. Mr. Temperley followed with his brilliant study of Canning. Mr. Butler's *Great Reform Bill* dismissed the Tories from the scene which they had occupied, not without glory though not always with intelligence, for more than a long generation. And now Mr. Clark has traced their history from their seeming annihilation to their triumphant return. I do not think his book stands on the same level as the other three: in fact, the subject he has selected does not strike me as furnishing material for a *book* at all. The 'thirties are one of the most interesting decades in English history, but the interest is in the social and economic background. Politically, it is a melancholy age, and the forced sprightliness of Mr. Clark's manner, fertile in metaphors and oracles, does not make it livelier. I know it is a current presumption among historical students that there is nothing hidden that ought not to be revealed: personally, if B.M. Add. MSS. 40420 shows that in March 1833 the Duke of Portland was at Newmarket and Bonham was negotiating for his interest in Ayrshire, I am inclined to think that this piece of information might remain there, or be at the most communicated to fellow students in professional articles which the writing his-

An educated palate deserves

DE RESZKE

The Aristocrat of Cigarettes

American - 25 for 1/10

American de Luxe 25 for 2/-

De Reszke *Virginias* 20 for 1/-

Tenor (Turkish) 25 for 3/2

Egyptian Blend 20 for 2/-

De Reszke *Turks* 20 for 1/-

J. MILLHOFF & CO. LTD., 86 PICCADILLY, W.1

CHELSEA BOOK CLUB LTD

326 King's Road, Chelsea

London, S.W.3

Phone: Kensington 7847



Large stock of 18th-
century Literature
in contemporary
bindings, and of
modern works

B O O K S

1929 Autumn
Publishing Season

*New works of the following
authors and artists are an-
nounced by the leading
publishers*

John Galsworthy	John Masfield
Hugh Walpole	Bernard Shaw
André Maurois	J. B. Priestley
Edmund Blunden	Aldous Huxley
F. Brett Young	John Buchan
Bertrand Russell	Emil Ludwig
Sir James Jeans	The Sitwells
Dean Inge	Eric Gill
Arthur Rackham	E. Fitch Daglish
	Russell Flint

BUMPUS

John & Edward Bumpus Ltd.

350 Oxford Street, W.1

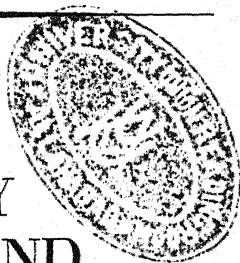
torian will compress into an epigram. A more serious demerit is that Mr. Clark does not handle his Parliamentary history well: his account of the three Reform Bills is far from lucid: the reader is told how the Houses differed over the Aldermen's Clause in the Municipal Reform Bill, but is left to discover why it was so important: the great debates on Peel's taking office in 1834, turning on points of constitutional doctrine of the first importance, required a much more serious treatment. It always seems ungenerous to blame researchers, who get little enough praise in any case, and Mr. Clark's work undoubtedly contains much material painfully won and lucidly disposed. But I think that a clear distinction between professional and public writing is essential to the prosperity of historical studies, and Mr. Clark seems to me to have missed the mark by trying to combine two kinds.

Wide Fields, by Paul Green (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.), is a very remarkable volume of short stories, dealing with village life in North Carolina. Paul Green is still a comparatively young man, yet he shows already great narrative skill and an unusual command of dialogue—what is more, dialogue in the crabbed but expressive *patois* which his rustic characters speak. He manages to interest us—as how few story-tellers can—in an *entire* district, the *whole* community which inhabits it, their love-affairs, their corybantic pray-meetings, and the complete ramification—apparently simple but, viewed closer, extremely intricate—of antipathies and affections which bind them together. One of the most hopeful American products I have lately read.

LIFE AND LETTERS

CYRIL CONNOLLY

ENGLAND MY NOT MY ENGLAND



The love-affair, of which these extracts form a record, is in a closing stage, even at the moment where they begin. Indeed, it had already lasted twenty-three years, and for the seven before this diary opens been dangerously articulate. Actually we have only selected the lover's vows and recriminations to his country from a batch of other declarations he made during the same period to literature, autumn, and even life itself. Only in autumn, in fact, does he seem happy, and for the rest of the year his country, unwilling to be desired merely for its climatic accidents, takes a cruel revenge. 'The course of true love' is more than applicable to this *passion malheureuse* whose every phase seems to echo the complaint of Martial: 'non tecum possum vivere, nec sine te'. Finally, Paris seduces him, he runs away with all his passion turned to hate, and the affair ends on a note of benign disillusion that is perhaps more cynical than any wrath could ever be. Like most lovers, the author appears fractious, embittered, egotistical, and not always inclined to be sincere. Well, there it is, and we cannot help feeling that if things had

been different, if there had been a little more patience and understanding on both sides, if he had been more industrious with his pen, and his country more generous with her money, we might still see them billing and cooing together. Alas for him and his Lesbia, it seems that this was not to be, now Mr. Punch, a few Georgian poets, gossip-writers, and lady novelists woo the cool green Motherland—who yields herself, however, only to Mr. Galsworthy. Does she ever regret—we sometimes try to imagine—her odd-eared lover? Is the wound incurable? The breach—we wonder muzzily—the whole thing over? And somehow we cannot help feeling that it isn't; but then, in this country, we usually feel that.

30th June 1927

Dined alone and caught boat to Caen. Leaving England felt like losing a limb.

22nd July 1927

I have no ambition, but will a horror of being stationary, a panic fear of keeping still, make up for it?

27th July 1927

Bad lunch on Dover boat and dreary crossing. Oh, the superb wretchedness of English food, how many foreigners has it daunted, and what a subtle glow of nationality one feels in ordering a dish that one knows will be bad and being able to eat it! The French do not understand cooking, only good cooking—this is where we score. Pleasant journey up to London reading newspapers; a grey and windy day. Arrive at Victoria and feel like Rip van Winkle, but with a vague sense of home-coming and security at being back again. All foreigners are frightful, and Europe is crawling with them.

29th July 1927

Asked Desmond about himself, and he spoke of his life at twenty-three, he told me he was as idle as I was and eventually it made him ill. I said I knew the feeling.

2nd to 4th August 1927

I ought in fairness to announce that these two days by the sea I have been distinctly happy.

3rd August 1927

Perfect summer's day, which seems the flower of all the summer days in history and makes England incomparably richer than Greece. Went out after dinner and walked down to the shore, where the cat followed me. There were some men cutting up a log of driftwood. The sky was rose and the sea pale green, and though the hills of the island and the lights of Fawley were clear, there was a thick mist on the shore, through which the men at the timber loomed large as I walked along with the cat over the pebbles. Came back and called up an owl. Bennies on the air, horses in the mist, the boy scouts singing and their tents glowing in the dark. The black cat very lively on the garden wall and the light in a bedroom window shining out over the fields. It seemed terrible to be going, even in a month, to London on such a day.

3rd September 1927

Depressed, unhappy, and apprehensive. This fag-end London.

8th September 1927

My thoughts run to depression as a child to its mother. Not to be born is best, or being born, to live at Cadiz.

17th September 1927

Lovely, unexpected, hopeless summer's evening. Resolve: to live more and more in the present, cultivating especially intensity and inconstancy in personal relations, to break free, so far as loyalty permits, from all unions that chain one to the past, while retaining them in so far as they provide a commentary, otherwise to fall in love as impermanently as possible with whoever I am with, to study life not death, the present, not the past, the actual not the literary. Only by giving the best of myself to the moment can I make it give its best to me. A rapid series of unbearable partings is the best proof that one is living—to live in the present is the most provident of all ways of life, for by that alone can one create a valuable past. *Pas de recherché sans temps perdu*—no chronicles, without wasted time.

20th September 1927

Depression over. Here and now I recant like Stesichorus: life is thrilling, valuable, wholly adequate and enough. This spurt of the senses; this welling up of the mind; the magnificent power of expenditure and recovery; the accumulation of richness and depth like a symphony whose orchestra grows always fuller, whose melodies begin to develop and repeat themselves always with a greater promise and a new implication, are finer than anything that can be deduced about them; are not adorned by any tale. Life has no moral, and the moral of art is that life is worth while without one.

I am just twenty-four and dangerously happy. For once I feel ambitious and desire and believe in my chances of fame. I want to give lavishly to everyone, to enrich life as it is enriching me—granted but the vitality

to love life, I will give it everything that has made it loved. Till then, spare me ω τὸ φθόνερον.

As I wrote this I found the pages of someone's diary in the 'nineties, left in at the end of a blank notebook: 'Venice. Church at twilight. Candles. Singing, Per i poveri morti. People die. I shall lose them, no more hear their voices. Let us cling to the best, forgive, not notice. I too shall die: this colour and this warmth will pass from me. Let me treasure the right things, see this world brighter for the frame of death.' The same pleading, the same appeal as mine. The rhetorical cry of all youth to all life, to be allowed merely to love it, to love the sphinx that breaks her lovers, to feed the hand that bites them, the indifferent hour.

27th September 1927

Converted to Paris through finding a Spanish cabaret where flamenco is sung, and by the lovely spacious autumn light and the contented people. A living crowd, while in London all the faces are dead.

To be obtained before I am twenty-five: £1,000 a year, a book published, a Spanish mistress, some fame, more friends, a knowledge of German, and a visit to Cadiz.

When I was going through a bullying phase at Eton I made Buckley write a weekly essay for me on Wayne, Milligan, Eastwood, and other boys. At first he disliked these essays as much as the subjects, but soon he grew conceited over them and resented any criticism. I can't attach any moral to this or discover why it cropped up in my mind.

London. 10th October 1927

I get happier and happier—autumn intoxicates me. So does London. Richer, deeper, and more delicate, what

can life hold in store? I find it gets harder and harder to read or write: I tremble on the verge of plain material hedonism though still retaining the capacity to moralize about it, the senses continue to feed the mind though nothing else does. The sun shines through my window, the air is fresh and cold, and the bell rings to take me down, to lunch alone off beer and a cold partridge, before going for a walk in the park. Life alone is worthy of being worshipped and with the highest blend one can bring to it of scholarship and vitality.

15th October 1927

Long quiet evening alone, dining off tea, and digestion very bad. I must go to Cadiz in the spring and live and write there: London is too dangerous.

1st November 1927

Depression, literary and physical. Literature is a dead form. Avoid literary people, they go round and round like water running out of a bath, dregs that never can forgive each other. Avoid tea-tables, envy and affectation are within you, but you can at least avoid tea-tables. Sulk through life and in sulky places, Russia or the untidiest parts of South America. Possess nothing but lumber, store everything in houses, but do not live in them. Find the most confidently material civilization and see how it behaves. Scheme of life, make money, drop writing, go long voyages, hang round life: shadow it, worry it, bore it, only come back to Ireland or England when you have learnt how to miss them. Take notes and fix moments, but leave the task of setting them in order to your old age—if you can die young with nothing finished, you do well to do so.

On a base of profound and wary disillusioned indolence stands all my hope of tolerating death.

17th November 1927

Damn life, damn love, damn literature. In other words, damn journalism. Live out of London, drop journalism—drop one made impossible by loneliness, the other by finance. Make £1,000 a year, make pots of money out of a novel. Too soft for journalism, too rough for literature, I would be wretched abroad, bored in the country, what can one do? Trust to the ultimate creative effort of my own impatience? O for Old Buffer, I for ink-slinger, G for Jesus, A for Agag.

What's the Latin name for parsley?

What's the Greek name for swine's snout?

March 1928

General sense of depression and disgust with usual horror of literature. Last days in London characterized by financial needs, desperate anxiety to get abroad, and deepening passion for low life. Spent every evening exploring London; one should be able to live at least three lives concurrently, and heaven knows how many in rotation. In a complex age, why not be complicated? Resolve: to associate with all the people I am afraid of most.

June 1928

Back in England; feel nothing but an intense disgust at its stupidity. Fatuous newspapers still fussing about the Prayer Book. The wireless with its children's corner, reports of tennis matches, lectures on the composition of the cricket team, on the searchlight tattoo. Absurd music,

jolly, idiotic, or merely oodly. Miss Ivy St. Helier beginning: 'Don't be afraid, I'm not highbrow'—nor she is. All actors and actresses with their frightful genteel Balliol and Tottenham accents. Miss Gladys Cooper married to a gentleman at Dorking. She drew a blank for her profession, dodged the crowd, and gave some money to a charity. He's all right, he's a gugnunc. Really, the most deplorable country, Americanized without America's vitality or variety of race. And this absurd fuss about Shaw and Galsworthy. Assets of England: the climate, the countryside, the children, the presence of a few kindred spirits in rebellion, the country houses, the fact that I can speak its language, that it is in easy reach of the Continent.

The problem is not how to attack the Jewish-American gugnunc world, but whether there is any ideal of equal activity that we can put in its place. At present it absorbs almost all the vitality of the Western races, and no half-timbered sanctuary, no Pagan rockpool, can be substituted for it. Again, since it is at its worst in America, it is from America that the rebellion will come—we are all too soaked in tradition and culture, and not sufficiently aware of this, to create anything outside of them. Saving the countryside must make it a museum.

Tatters of rain streak from a dishcloth sky. Soon England will be a slagheap city in a rubble field, stogged bottles in the dingy grass, burdock and peeled hoardings stretching down to a litter of boots and halves of empty grape-fruit cast up by a backwater ocean on an insanitary shore.

Why not let the countryside be finished, instead of propping it up in this long agony, this imbecile position between death and life?

October 1928

Back in London after five weeks in Spain. General dissatisfaction and distress. Unpleasant sense, not only of being just where I was this time last year, but of being practically just where I was the year before. As homeless, futureless, hopeless, and unestablished as ever. Shall I live in Paris or the country? I am also less interested in literature, if anything, and not really so interested in life, no sign either of the flow of natural high spirits that I had last year. I suppose my happiness is a difficult crop that requires sun, rain, soil, manure and tending to make it flower at all.

10th October 1928

By some seasonable miracle I seem to be falling in love with London and recapturing the same exaltation that I attributed merely to youth last year. To feel this jungle come to life all round one in the evening, the same October mists, fires, lights, wet streets, blown leaves, to plunge into its many zones, not knowing what one will discover, and to return with a growing sense of confidence and power as a new street or a new district falls beneath one's rule, is to feel a true explorer, or rather is to combine the intimacy of a wooer with the excitement of an adventurer; to run my fingers through the town's limp body, to caress the lax pulsating city as rashly, as apprehensively, as a Greek might an Amazon or a small spry leopard make of some great cat.

1st November 1928

General disgust, especially with literature. Same as this time last year, only feebler.

2nd November 1928

Terrible *envie* for Paris. The cafés, the lights, the crowded warm interiors, the wasters, the artists, the drunks, the sense of liberty and rebellion, the cold transition, on the Boulevard, of afternoon to evening.

5th November 1928

Almost as depressed and dissatisfied as this time last year, my life seems in every way to have retrogressed. Poorer, older, idler, stuck in the same house, the same groove with infinitely fewer friends and considerably less curiosity. Resolve: to be more of an artist and a Bolshevik, to write a lot and go to Paris and live in Mont Parnasse, if not in love or otherwise adequately detained here by December 1st. *Envie* for Paris continues severe. 'The slow gradations of decay.'

November 1928

One cannot really love London. It is disappointing in every way. A foggy, dead-alive city, like a dying ant-heap. London was created for rich young men to shop in, dine in, ride in, get married in, go to theatres in, and die in as respected householders. It is a city for the upper class unmarried, not for the poor. Every writer and artist must feel a sense of inferiority in London unless he is (like Browning or Henry James) a romantic snob—or else fits into the Reynolds-Johnson tradition of Fleet Street, Garrick, good burgundy, and golf. Arnold Bennett is the English Bohemian. Of course, there are Bohemians, but they have to be smart ones, otherwise they are afraid to show themselves; without a quarter, without cafés their only chance is to get rich and voguey and give cocktail parties. In Paris they have a quarter assigned to them, and are lords of it. They aren't much

better as artists, but they are freer, happier, and harder working, and live in an atmosphere where great art is more likely to arise.

The more one sees of life the more one is aware how hopeless it is without art to synthesize it. 'To love life in all its forms' is like loving pumice stone in all its forms, or journalism. Life is only in exceptional cases worthy of being loved, though those cases, of course, are in no way connected with vitality—to love life is to have the curiosity to search for the occasions when life is lovable—or rather the enterprise to create them.

And in London they are few.

Moment of happiness at Yeomain Row. Yellow sunlight through the panes on golden cushions and glass of wine, reading in the armchair, far cries of children playing.

Fear of life, hate of self, general misery and intermittent self-pity these last few days. Quando ver venit meum. Sombra soy de quién murió. Lost a five pound note at a bad revue, culmination of misery on Saturday night—the most unlovable mug in England. Feel ill unless I drink, and depressed when I do. Wild fits of mawkish gloom, 'genteel canine pathos'—the world whips only those who look as if they've just been whipped.

O douleur, O douleur, le temps mange la vie,
et l'obscur ennemi qui nous ronge le cœur
du sang que nous perdons croît et se fortifie.

December 1928

A wild month, intoxication of London as before.

1929

With a deepening sense of guilt, failure, loneliness, and insecurity, I greet the New Year.

General reflections.—Read and written far too little, increased confidence however, and aptitude for life. Deterioration in highmindedness generally, a year of social success, amorous enterprise, æsthetic Bolshevism, and physical, moral, and emotional falling back.

January 1929

‘Thou hast led me like a heathen sacrifice with garlands and with sacred yokes of flowers to my eternal ruin.’

Resolve: To be altogether more advanced and intelligent, to have more friendships and fewer affairs, to write and read more than I eat and drink, go to Paris again and win a prize with a novel.

‘We have no precedent for an English intelligentsia. The flower of our civilization is a certain splenetic enterprise, and instinctive dignity in living, an absolute grasp of the material splendour of life—a young buck tilting down St. James’s Street, a clean old man in a club window, a great writer married to an earl’s daughter, a country gentleman reading Keats—these are the fruits of our mind and upbringing, these are the images we should preserve. Writing is a lapse of taste rather than a crime: it is explicit and hence in opposition to our character and our climate.’

Back from Yorkshire appalled at my happiness of a week in the country. Enjoyed the countryside under snow, the warm house, the tobogganing, the shoot, the smell of cartridges, the heavy winging and thud of falling birds on the smoky evening air. Standing in the wet woods listening to the beaters tapping and whistling, watching the farm cart full of birds bowling home over the park. Oh, the joy of lingering over port and brandy telling dirty stories while it snows outside! The grim, rich,

game-pie England of eighteenth-century squires, brown woods and yellow waistcoats.

Abroad, I was at least interesting to myself—in London I can't be even that. I only exist to celebrate my sense of guilt.

1st February 1929

Back in London, miserably depressed. Persecution mania, sense of solitary confinement. Finally decided London unendurable and packed up in the middle of dinner and left. It was raining as I fled to St. Pancras. The train was a red Midland express, huge drays kept coming down the platform, I lit my cigar and played the gramophone. It was one of the most pleasant solitary journeys I have ever made. The train slid through Barking and the wet stations of the East End, I played slow foxtrots in my empty carriage and felt that at last I had become a real person again. It was very wet and windy at Tilbury. I stood on deck and watched the lights along the Thames. I had a perfect moment as the boat moved out. The wind was cold and the water choppy, all the passengers were below and I saw the pilot dropped—as the little tug shot away from the ship in an Ionic curve like the prong of a boathook I had an exquisite sense of the finality of leaving, of which that seemed a definite symbol. It was very rough and we got to Dunkirk in icy cold, pitch-dark and freezing. In the train this became a beautiful winter morning, and with no remorse I played flamenco to the rising sun.

July 1929

Landed at Newhaven. Depressed at being back in England. The countryside so dirty, sky and fields the colour of corrugated iron. Everybody so weak and knock-

knead, a race of little ferrets and blindworms. England is a problem: parts of it so beautiful, a few people in it so intelligent, yet I can never manage to fit in. The intelligent ones are so stranded, such detached and *défaitiste* observers, the extraordinarily nice people, of whom there are probably more than in any other country, are also extraordinarily stupid, the 'amusing' ones so dull. I hate colonels, but I don't like the people who make fun of them. Those who conform become impossible, and those who rebel only rebel towards a continental snobbery instead of a county one. A wave of retrograde and stupid conservatism seems to be sweeping the country. There is no place in England for a serious rebel, if you hate both diehards and bright young people you must, like Lawrence, Joyce, or Aldous Huxley, go and live abroad. It is better to be *depaysé* in someone else's country rather than in one's own.

Disgusted by the crowd at Brighton. So dull, so dead, so weebegone, hardly a soul in holiday clothes, they might be waiting on a tube platform. Women all dowdy, men undersized and weedy. Pathetic voices and gestures, newspaper-fed ignorance, wistful cannon-fodder larvae that trail around whining out their day's ration of bromides as if at any moment somebody was going to hit them. No trace even of charwoman cockney or Dickensian vulgarity either, just little ferrety robots squeaking round an empty bandstand. Oh, the stupidity of the old regime and the silliness of its detractors. Yet for this Mr. T. S. Eliot changes his brown passport for a true blue one.

16th July 1929

Went for a long walk to Lulworth Cove. For an instant, on the lonely crest of the downs, above an old house that

sloped down through a semicircle of beechwoods to the sea, I had a moment of love for my country, just as one may suddenly prepare to forgive some one who has deceived us before the memory of their infidelities swarms in on us again. As we walked farther, however, I remembered not so much the beauty of the downs as the awfulness of the people who wrote about them: Kipling's thyme and dewponds, Belloc's beer, and Chesterton's chalk, all the people writing poems at this moment for the *London Mercury*, and two tiresome undergraduates who discuss culture at the inn. They gaze, between mouthfuls of tomato, at the Victorian lithographs round the parlour: 'Caught Napping', 'The Love Letter', 'Their First Quarrel', 'The Story of a Brave End'. 'Pretty serious!' grunts one to the other. 'Terrible' grunts the culture specialist. Glubet magnanimos Remi nepotes, I thought, undeterred by a burst of exquisite woodland ride between the cliffs and the valley. A—— was more loyal to the Motherland, but talked exclusively of Villiers de l'Isle Adam all the way. We reached a cottage by the sea for lunch. A—— flattered the landlady and praised the bread and cheese rather professionally. For this, to my joy, we were charged two shillings each, and I maintained that one couldn't be robbed more if one was a foreigner. I asked if I could bathe from the rocks without a costume. 'There be bobbies' eyes from here to Weymouth,' she said. Eventually we got to Lulworth Cove through a maze of complacent military reminders that a fatal accident had occurred in 1927 'through a pedestrian using the path along the cliffs when the red flag was flying'. From Arishmell the sound of church bells was wafted down the

petrol-scented English lanes past the carefully thatched cottages.

O God, to hear the parish bell
in Arishmell, in Arishmell!

The cove was like a fly-paper. People in every direction, and twelve charabancs parked across a space for building lots. 'I wish I had a camera,' I cried, and A—— answered: 'I wish I had a machine gun'. At that a miracle happened, the helpless bitterness with which he vainly protested seemed to snap something in my head, and I felt the relief with which one passes an old flame and feels 'that face can never trouble me again.' The deformed and swarming trippers, the motor-car park, the wooden bungalows and the tin tea-sheds seemed a heavy joke at which I could look on with ironic detachment. I felt suddenly quit of everything: my sense of possession, in regard to England, had been finally scotched. Besides, even if it is beautiful, I thought, from my point of view, that of finding things to write about this country-side, except for a few still unchronicled phases of winter, it is virtually dead. 'The country habit has me by the heart' wrote some one trying to find a fresh approach to that Grantchestered old trollop—this England—or as the papers archly call it, 'This England of ours'. I thought of all the ardent bicyclists, the heroic coupleteers, the pipe-smoking beer-swilling young men on reading parties. The brass-rubbers, the accomplished morris dancers, the Innisfreeites, the Buchan-Baldwin-Masefield and Drinkwatermen, the Squires and Shanks and grim Dartmoor realists, the advanced tramp lovers, and, of course, Mary Webb. I thought of every one who was striding down the Wordsworthian primrose path to the

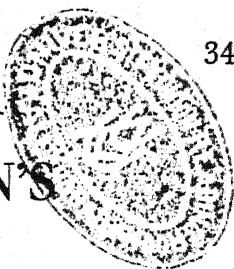
glorious goal of an O.M. 'The country habit has me by the heart' I chanted to the Lulworth trippers, and in an usher's voice of mincing horror 'procul o procul este profani'—but it was my friend, not they, who fled.

Went down to the cove for a bathe. Warm sunny evening. Walking back (the grace of childhood still irradiates the 'walk to the sea') I met a man with a motor-caravan. Stayed and talked to him and his wife and daughter. Green beds spread in the open, a book lying on the grass, some pails, and his wife cooking porridge. He had spent his life in the East and had just retired. Walked up with them to the vicarage garden, where they were to do country dances. A few children, one or two village women and farmboys, and a couple of bustling ladies with muddy red faces and fringes of greying hair. They danced on the grass to a gramophone. 'Now come along—if all the world were paper—siding, turn, slips, take your partner and swing!—if all the world were paper—too slow—too slow—too slow!' The village women pant seriously, the spinsters dance briskly, giving directions from a little book. I gingerly take part, put out to find myself among the prophets, the Anglo-Indians skip with experience and the children stare. The girls are breathless and lightfooted, yet heavy with a mind of rustic materialism, their faces and figures are gauche with adolescence, like unfinished statues left in the marble. They grin and call to the children in thick sweet Dorset voices. 'Now Newcastle—now gathering peascods'—or is it 'picking up sticks'? The plaintive music so naïvely vicious, so innocently sophisticated, floats out on the evening. 'We want only the best for "Clergyman's Farewell"—it's very difficult—single hey, turn, slip, siding, now be careful, double hey, grand chain!' I walk

away up the road, the distressful notes of 'Clergyman's Farewell', the young voices, sad slice of wan little England, pursue me over the fields. A sheep dog is sleeping by the pond and outside the inn some boys are playing cricket with a stone. The sun westers brightly over the folded plateau, and every flower and every weed, the air, the downs, the grey cottages, unite with the distant archaic music to cry 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?'

A mood of final emancipation came to me the next morning. I leant against a long wall underneath a window when suddenly a voice began to bellow from inside. 'Very important. Causal conjunctions. We went very deeply into this last week. Read it out.' 'Causal conjunctions,' quavered a choir of young voices. 'Quippe, qui, and quoniam take the indicative.' 'Quippe, qui, and quoniam,' bellowed the usher, interrupting them, 'take the indicative.' The rasping voice sounded like the cry of a wild animal, as if one had passed on the top of a bus by the Zoo, but the uncouth language blended perfectly with the summer scene outside. 'Take this down—take it down, will you,' the roar continued. 'Conjectus est in carcerem—he was thrown into prison—quod patrem occidisset—on the grounds that he had killed his father—qui eo tempore—who at that time was flying into Italy—in Italianam refugiebat. RE-FU-GI-EBAT,' he thundered, and the pedagogic rhythms floated out into the sun and along the dusty hedgerows. 'Conjectus est in carcerem,' mumbled the scribbling pupils; 'quippe qui and quoniam,' they chanted; 'causal conjunctions' till the words were lost above the Isle of Purbeck, a drone above the drone of bees.

DAPHNE MUIR
HENDERSON'S



It was not a pleasant evening in any way. The Karroo can be cold in August, though to the English traveller South Africa seems to be a country always gold with sun, a flaming, riotous, colourful country, blazing and barren.

That night it was cold. The sun sank, and with it all the heat went out of the day, suddenly. A cold wind swept across the little hills and down the dusty street of the village, isolated and insignificant, the only one of its kind within a radius of more than a hundred miles. It seemed so flat and small and futile, compared with the burning stars so high above us, and the great stretching desert so far around us, that had we not been cold and tired and hungry we would hardly have noticed it. But as it was, we were glad to see it, for it offered shelter and warmth and food, and we raced down the slight slope that led to its main street, the engine roaring, the doors and mud-guards rattling, the brakes squeaking.

We must have sounded like a truck-load of old iron being shunted into a siding, so crazy and battered was the car, which we had picked up for thirty pounds on the Grand Parade at Cape Town, at one of the public auctions of rubbish which take place every Saturday morning. We were proud of that car because it was the first that we had ever owned, and although we knew its defects were obvious to the most casual onlooker, yet it had advantages which were known to us alone. It stood for freedom, for open spaces, for young manhood claim-

ing the right to live its own life. It was a personality. It had character. Above all, it was ours. We had been bred in a city, and had learned to walk on pavements. We had exchanged our perambulators for omnibuses. Except when we went into the country we could see no farther than the point at which two long lines of houses came together at the end of a street. This was a country without perspective, as it was without pavements. Ox-waggons took the place of motor-lorries. Flannel shirts took the place of waistcoats and jackets. Canning and I had a hundred pounds in our pockets, and our return tickets to Liverpool. We felt like millionaires.

But even our gay spirits seemed to fail us on that cold August night. A frost outside, and the clear biting darkness of the night seemed to make the miserable room in which we sat even more stuffy and unwholesome by contrast. We tried to knock the balls about on the decayed billiard-table under the smoking oil-lamps, while the dirty little Jewish bar-tender spent his time in alternately scoring for us and pouring drinks for a taciturn white-haired man who sat leaning against the bar.

It was a beastly place, that small furtive hotel, and could never have been anything but a beastly place at any time. There was only one street in the village that could be called a street. It ran straight from the north to the south, and stretched little byways east and west from itself, that seemed for a few yards to think they were streets, and then decayed into foot-paths leading nowhere. The houses were all one story high, drab and dust-coloured. If they had gardens, they concealed them behind walls built of the same drab sunburnt brick as they themselves. Their windows were secretly shuttered

with great solid shutters, inside their small panes of glass. They seemed to be deserted, forlorn, uninhabited by any but ghosts who were afraid of the starlight. There were no trees at all but stunted pepper-trees, hardly bigger than a man. The hotel—it was called the Commercial or the Central or some such non-committal title, which had long ago faded from its signboard—was two stories high. A ragged balcony stood out above the front door, with sagging planks and festoons of cobwebs waving in the wind. The railing of the balcony was broken too, though its protection was not needed, for any one setting foot upon it would fall through the floor long before he could reach the edge. It looked what it was—a ramshackle vermin-ridden house of call, kept up by casual travellers like ourselves, forced to accept its unsavoury hospitality against their will. The villagers did not cluster noisily about its bar. The usual smells of food that hung about it were not those of freshly-cooked vegetables or roasting meat, but old, musty smells, left by forgotten meals.

We went in reluctantly, and were greeted by a native woman, who showed us our room with no more conversation than 'Ja, Baas', which she murmured almost inaudibly. When we entered it, she shut the door and fled. We could hear her bare feet scurrying along the coco-nut matting in the passage. I rushed to open the window, and Canning looked round him. We had only one candle, which the girl was carrying when we arrived at the hotel, and which she had left on the wash-hand-stand. It was not much light, but it was enough to show us more dirt and decay than we had ever seen before. There were cobwebs in the corners, and the wallpaper was hanging in strips on the walls, greasy and nondescript, though

once no doubt it had blossomed with florid Victorian flowers. There was a double bed. The knobs of its posts were missing, and one leg rested on a brick in place of the castor which it had long ago lost. A rent in the corner of its honeycomb quilt permitted a ragged fragment to droop to the floor. Canning picked up the candle and looked at a picture of the entire British Navy at the time of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, though the glass was so spotted and greasy that it was almost unrecognizable.

We washed in cold water from a cracked ewer, and went downstairs, where, in a frowsy dining-room, the same coloured servant gave us tepid Irish stew on plates that had already upon them the remnants of at least three meals. We were hungry, and we were young. We ate the food, and washed it down with coffee that had never known Kenya or Mexico, and then drifted idly into the bar. For a while we played on the faded billiard-table that stood there. The cushions had no resistance, and the balls ran where they liked. It was a hopeless game.

The silence of the old man worried us too. He seemed to be in possession, and we felt intruders. It was too early to go to bed, for the bed we had seen invited no more than the most necessary repose. We had to pass the time somehow, but the farce of the game was too much for us. Canning leaned his cue against the wall, and began to talk at random. This was not a place to be silent in, for the wind howled around the corners, boards creaked, and from overhead at intervals came a curious convulsive murmur which seemed almost like a woman sobbing.

'I wonder where drinks get their names,' said Canning, dropping on to the springless sofa from which the horse-hair protruded in patches, and looking with distaste at

the grimy bar and the bottles on the other side of it. They seemed to leer at us horribly, and the blotchy, leprous mirror which they flanked gave back distorted and unclean reflections.

I shrugged my shoulders and muttered something, and Canning went on:

'Take "Pink-eye", for instance, and all the fancy cocktail names, or "Horse's Neck", or "Dog's Nose"——'

The man beside the bar stood up. We had been uncomfortably conscious of him all the time we had been in the room, but he had seemed to pay no attention to us, sitting quietly drinking, and occasionally muttering to himself under his breath.

'It's funny that you should mention "Dog's Nose",' he said aloud, addressing us for the first time. 'That was Henderson's drink. Did you ever hear of Henderson?'

Canning and I shook our heads.

The bar-tender gave him a quick, frightened look, and I fancied his hand shook a little as he refilled the glass which was pushed out to him. He was thoroughly in keeping with the place, that bar-tender, in creased ill-fitting clothes, a cigarette drooping loosely from his mouth, and his quick, shifty eyes peering at us suspiciously from under his receding forehead. But he was a type after all, and a type, no matter how unpleasant, does not make one feel uncomfortable. It is something human, something that one can understand. But the other man, the one who had suddenly spoken, was of no type that I had ever seen before. His white hair hung dankly over his collar. His smooth flat face, with its pendulous chin, was the colour of tallow. His nose was very large, jutting out from his face impressively, but its impressiveness was diminished by his small, lack-lustre eyes. His eyes seemed

almost like blind eyes, looking vacantly from behind a film at a world which held nothing of any consequence whatever.

'Henderson used to live here,' said the man in a monotonous voice. 'He made a lot of money here. He built this place as a sanatorium, and after the Boer War he advertised it in the English papers. He said the Karroo was splendid for the lungs.'

We listened to him without enthusiasm. What was Henderson to us or we to Henderson? That the place should ever have been a sanatorium seemed grotesque enough, but we were frankly bored. He came over and looked at us for a moment, and then drifted back to his old seat as though satisfied.

'Henderson wouldn't have women here. Their relations worried too much about them.' He chuckled. 'Only men. Young men, young men with money,' and he chuckled again reminiscently.

'They're mostly down in the graveyard now. When all their money was gone they didn't see much use in going on living. Henderson had the money. Some of them got away in time, of course, but not many.'

He pushed his glass out again, and again the bar-tender filled it. He gave us each in turn a queer look, apparently to see if he held our interest, drank some of his brandy, and went on.

'They used to play poker in this room. None of them cared much for billiards. The chalk made them cough. So they sat round an old card-table in that corner, and played poker with Henderson; and Henderson always won. Henderson was a good poker-player.'

Canning shifted restlessly, and I sympathized with him. This boring story about nothing in particular

might go on all night, and what could we do? The man fixed his pale eyes on us, as if he were hypnotizing us, and it would have needed more moral courage than either of us possessed to get up and go out. Besides, there was nowhere to go. He took no notice of Canning's movement, but went on placidly.

'Gradually the place got a bad name, and people didn't come out to it any more. Too many deaths, I suppose. Henderson took to drinking pretty hard about then, and that didn't help things much. That was Henderson's one failing—drink. That, and laughing. Plenty of people didn't like his laugh. Told him so to his face.'

Again he chuckled.

'The end of it all came about twenty years ago. The place had gone downhill until there were only three people staying here—Barnes and the two Truefitts. The elder Truefitt said he was the son of a hatter in Knightsbridge. Perhaps he was, but he didn't seem to have anything to prove it. Still, if he wanted to say that he was the son of a hatter in Knightsbridge, it didn't seem to matter to anybody.'

He paused, but it was obviously for purposes of recollection, and not as if he expected any remark from us. Indeed, he seemed almost unaware of our existence. It was as if he were telling the story to himself.

'The elder Truefitt also said that the younger Truefitt was his brother. How he expected anybody to believe a lie like that, I don't know. It was quite obvious that the younger Truefitt was a woman. Henderson's rule about women had never been broken before, because he had always been very strict about it; but now he said nothing. He may have needed the money, or he may

just not have cared a damn, now that the whole show was wrecked. Anyway, he said nothing, and let things go on. Barnes said nothing either. He was a man who liked to keep out of trouble, and it was no business of his.'

He scowled at the bar-tender, who was wiping some glasses with a dirty cloth; and then his flat voice took up the tale.

'They were all four in here on the night I am talking about. It was a night just like this too, cold and windy—a bit more windy than this, perhaps. One of those shutters had got loose somehow, and was banging against the tank out there in the yard. It seemed to get on young Truefitt's nerves, and soon he got up and went to bed. How Truefitt ever thought he could stick us with that bunk about the woman being his brother, I certainly don't know. You could tell her a mile off, with half an eye.'

Again he thrust out his glass to be filled, but he didn't drink from it, he just sat looking at it, talking mechanically. He might have been talking in his sleep, he seemed so detached from his surroundings.

'Truefitt wanted a game at once. He had been gambling wildly at that time—losing, too, as everyone who played with Henderson always did. Hopeful up to the end, though. Truefitt was always hopeful. Thought, like those consumptives do, that the tide would turn and that everything would come all right. Henderson sat facing that sofa. He was very quiet that night, not talking or laughing, or even drinking: just reaching out and pulling in Truefitt's money every round. Barnes soon left the game and came over and stood here against the bar, watching. He seemed to know there was trouble brewing and didn't want to get mixed up in it. At last

Truefitt threw a fiver on the table. His eyes looked queer and shiny, and his cheek-bones were redder than ever.

"That's my last, Henderson," he said. "You've got it all but that, damn you. Come on. Bet."

'They played, and Henderson won. Truefitt seemed bewildered, as if he didn't understand what had happened.

"I've nothing left," he said.

'Henderson laughed. He was a bit strung up, too, mind you.

"Oh yes, you have," he said. "There's the woman."

"What woman?" Truefitt asked, and his voice was a bit too quiet to be safe.

"The one upstairs," said Henderson. "I've never been quite as drunk as all that, Truefitt; but I'm only accommodating as long as I'm paid for it. Will you play?"

'It was just then, and somehow quite naturally, that Truefitt pulled a revolver out of his pocket. Fingering it, he looked at Henderson, who grinned back at him carelessly. Yes—give Henderson his due—he wasn't afraid.

"Why I don't shoot you," said Truefitt, "I don't know."

"Because you haven't got the guts," said Henderson.

"It takes a man to shoot a man. Will you play?"

'Truefitt put the revolver on the table.

"Yes," he said. "I'll play."

'They played, and Truefitt lost.

'I want you to remember that all this time Barnes said nothing. In fact, he never said anything until it was all over, and what he said then didn't matter very much. It was unlucky for Barnes that he was there at all.

‘When Truefitt saw that he had lost, it didn’t seem to make much difference to him. But Henderson laughed.

“‘Call her down,” he said. “Let’s have a look at her.”

“‘It isn’t necessary for you to call her down,” said a voice from the door to Truefitt, “because she is here already. And it isn’t necessary for you to explain, for she understands.”

‘I don’t think I have ever seen one person hating another quite so much as that woman did when she looked at Truefitt.

‘Truefitt looked up and saw her standing there, and saw the way she looked at him. He knew what it meant. He must have known what it meant. Any one who wasn’t a fool could have seen that she had finished with him for good. He went all white, and made a funny noise in his throat, just as if he couldn’t help it. And then he spoke.

“‘Molly!” he said. It wasn’t like a man talking to any one. It was like saying “God” or “Hell” when you’re hurt. Just a word that doesn’t mean anything. And she stood quite still in the door, with eyes like a devil’s, glaring at him, until she didn’t look like a woman at all, but just two eyes in the door—two big yellow eyes in a white face.

‘Truefitt stretched out his hand, picked up the revolver, and shot himself. There was the crash of the revolver, and then the crash of his chair as he and it fell over together. For a minute nobody moved. Henderson stayed leaning back in his chair with his legs crossed and his hands in his pockets, Truefitt’s money lying piled up on the table in front of him. Barnes went on leaning against the bar while Truefitt’s wife—she really was his wife as it happened, we found out—stood stiff as a corpse in the

door. She was the first to move. She went to where Truefitt was lying, and took the revolver out of his hand. She turned to Henderson.

"“You said it took a man to shoot a man,” she said, “but you were wrong. A woman can do it.” And she lifted the gun and fired at Henderson. He stood up, his face getting sick and white. Then he cursed her, and slopped over on to the floor. Of course she fainted—just like a woman. That’s about all the story.”

The old man emptied his glass, put it down, and walked unsteadily to the door. He was a nasty old man sitting down, and he looked even nastier standing up, a great mountain of a man, repulsive and dirty, like some huge animal curiously human. As he went through the door he looked back, with his hand on the knob.

‘Henderson wasn’t cheating, that night,’ he said, and closed the door behind him. Both Canning and I shuddered slightly. He was such a very horrible old man, and the story seemed so suitable to the place where we sat. And we were still young, and a little impressionable. Canning turned to the bar-tender.

‘I suppose that’s Barnes?’ he said inquiringly, but the bar-tender shook his head.

‘Nope,’ he said laconically, omitting to remove the cigarette from his lip. ‘That’s Henderson. He always tells that story when he’s drunk. She did fire at him all right, but she only hit him in the shoulder.’

‘What happened to her?’ inquired Canning, eagerly.

‘Happened to her?’ asked the bar-tender. ‘What do you mean, “happened to her”? She’s still here. She took up with Henderson after they buried Truefitt. What else could she do? That’s her you can hear crying upstairs.’

LORD DAVID CECIL

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
AN EVANGELICAL

In his later years the Reverend John Newton, the friend and spiritual adviser of the poet Cowper, published for the edification of his fellow-evangelicals an account of his life entitled *An Authentic Narrative of some Interesting Particulars in the Life of John Newton*.

It is a fusty, forbidding little book; and more than half of it is pious platitude. But it enshrines within its stilted sentences one of the most fantastic fairy tales that was ever the true story of a human being.

John Newton was born in London in 1725, the son of a shipmaster. Even as a child he showed himself possessed of a superstitious, inflammable imagination, and a boiling dynamic energy, always restlessly searching for an object on which to expend itself. His mother, an old-fashioned Puritan, wished him to become a clergyman, and his mind was early forced to concentrate itself on religion. From time to time he would be seized with a fit of violent devotion. Once, at the age of fifteen, he was so excited by Beattie's *Church History* that for three months he would not eat any meat, and hardly opened his mouth for fear of letting fall one of those idle words for which he would have to give an account on the Last Day. However, his mother died. And with adolescence his virile nature began to react against the ideas to which he had been brought up. He was incapable of doing anything by halves, and he became a militant atheist. His father had sent him to sea: he threw himself with gusto

into the rioting, buccaneering life of the eighteenth-century sailor; and he took a fierce delight in blaspheming against the God he had before so scrupulously honoured. But from time to time the convictions of his childhood would reassert themselves and visit him in mysterious stirrings of conscience. Once, for example, he had a curious dream. It seemed to him that his ship was riding at anchor for the night in the harbour of Venice, where he had lately touched: the exquisite, worthless Venice of Longhi and Goldoni; a strange setting for the sombre fantasies of his Nordic imagination. It was his watch on deck, and as he stood gazing across the inky waters of the lagoon to where, on the lighted piazzetta, contessa and cicisbeo stepped masked from their gondolas to revel at the Ridotto, a stranger came up to him and gave him a ring, which he implored him not to lose, as he valued his life. He was followed by another, who as eloquently adjured him to throw the ring away. And he dropped it overboard. Immediately the spires of Venice were lit up with a lurid glare: behind them the Euganean hills burst into flame; and his tempter, turning on him with an expression of triumph, told him that they were lit for his destruction. At this moment a third stranger appeared. As he stepped on board the flames died away—he drew the ring from the water, but would not give it back; saying with a solemn emphasis that he should have it at some future time. Shuddering with terror, Newton awoke. The dream seemed to be a parable of his own spiritual life: the ring his salvation, the second stranger the power of evil. The dream was strangely vivid and he could not get it out of his head.

However, it could not for long divert his mind from following its natural course. Already, indeed, it was

dominated by a very different theme. His turbulent spirit found it hard to settle to any job; and about a year before he had got a new appointment on a ship bound for Jamaica. A few days before it sailed he went to pay a visit of courtesy on some people called Catlett, to whom his father had given him an introduction. He had hardly been in the house an hour before he had fallen in love with Miss Catlett, a girl of fourteen. His love was of a piece with his religion and his infidelity: a flaming, tearing, devouring passion that burned itself deep into him. For the moment time ceased to exist: his ship was due to sail in a few days; and he let it sail while he sat day after day with his eyes fixed, as in a trance, on the object of his adoration. And when at last he did go to sea, it was only to dream of Miss Catlett, and work with frenzied energy in order to make enough money to marry her. But now a succession of disasters began to overtake him. Recklessly lounging on Harwich Dock in his sailor's check shirt, he was caught by the press gang. His vitality enabled him to support his new condition with tolerable ease and cheerfulness. He soon became a midshipman, and he met a fellow-officer who supplied him with many useful new arguments against the existence of God. But when his ship was ordered to New Guinea and he was faced with the prospect of not seeing Miss Catlett for five years, he deserted. He was caught, brought back in irons, and, in accordance with the savage penal code of the day, publicly stripped, flogged, and degraded to the position of a common seaman. His rage knew no bounds. It was agony to one of his nature to obey where he had once commanded; and he felt he had lost his love for ever. He used to lie for hours as the ship made its way through the calm tropical waters, brooding on his wrongs till he was

half-mad. Sometimes he would decide to kill himself, sometimes the Captain, who had misused him, sometimes both. But always before he acted the figure of his love—all the lovelier by contrast with his present circumstances—would start before him, and his heart would be flooded with a softer emotion.

At last, after weary months, he arrived at Madeira, where he got exchanged on to another ship. His new captain was kind to him, but Newton was now so desperate that he became quite unmanageable, insubordinate to superiors, and given up to every vice. When they reached the Platane Islands on the west coast of Africa, he left the ship and took service with a planter. One would have thought it impossible that he should go through anything much worse than he had already. But he did. His master had a black mistress who took a violent dislike to Newton; and for two years he was treated more harshly than the meanest native slave, underclothed and underfed, and overworked. An attack of tropical fever, during which he lay unattended on the floor without even water to drink, was the final blow. He became like an animal, dumb and resigned, incapable of thought or emotion, or anything but a blind lust to satisfy the wants of nature. Only now and again memories of his early education would creep into his numbed brain. He had somehow managed to keep a tattered geometry in his pocket through all his adventures, and he would steal out by night, half-naked skeleton as he was, and, with its help, laboriously trace arcs and triangles on the sand in the brilliant light of the African moon.

After a year he got away and became foreman for another planter in the neighbouring islands of the Bananoes. Here his life was more supportable, save for an

occasional pang of regret for Miss Catlett. Such letters as he had written home had brought no reply and he had given up all hopes of getting back. He began to live more and more like the natives: gradually acquiring their habits and superstitions, so that he dared not allow himself to sleep once the moon was above the fronded palm-trees. However, after two years and a half, a ship arrived from England with a letter from his father asking him to come home. His first instinct was to refuse. But the thought that he might see Miss Catlett again, though he now had little hope of marrying her, caused him to change his mind.

Newton was now a very different human being from the stormy boy who had sailed from Torbay five years before. His conversation was still reckless and bitter and profane: so much so, indeed, that the horrified captain of the ship on which he travelled home began to fear it would bring a judgement on the ship. But the suffering Newton had undergone had left him with a disgust for the world. Its prizes no longer inspired his ambition, nor its pleasures his desires. Had he not followed the call of his passions wherever they had led him; and what had he got from them but bitterness and misery? But he could not resign himself to inactivity. His dynamic energy still boiled within him, seeking an outlet. He could not find it in worldly ambition or worldly enjoyment. Was there nothing more stable, more satisfying? Insensibly his mind began to revert for guidance to the beliefs implanted in it in infancy. A moment of danger brought it to the point of decision. Soon after the ship had left Newfoundland a violent storm got up; and within a few hours the upper timbers of the ship were torn away and it was flooded with water. Provisions,

cargo, and some men were lost, and during two days everybody worked at the pumps. For a time they seemed to be doing no good. With a thrill of fear Newton realized he was probably going to die. Once he caught himself exclaiming: 'If this will not do, the Lord have mercy on us.' The significance of his words suddenly came home to him. 'If He really exists,' he thought, 'there will be very little mercy for me.' In that moment of terrible crisis the whole of his life passed in vivid review before him; and it struck him with overwhelming force that of all the objects that had in turn commanded his allegiance, now at the point of death only the religion of his childhood retained any value in his eyes. It alone had not proved worthless or unattainable: all his sorrow might be dated from the date that he deserted it. He resolved, if he were saved, to devote the rest of his life to it. He was saved, and for the last few days of the voyage began to put his resolution into practice. He could not indeed feel a lively faith in Christianity, but he was convinced that such a faith alone had the slightest chance of giving him permanent happiness. And he hoped that by consistently living in accordance with Christian precept he might obtain it.

He arrived in England to find his father away on a voyage. But he had made arrangements with a ship-owner friend of his to offer Newton a job, first as mate and then as captain, on a line of ships trading in slaves; so that his future was assured. More pleasing still, he found Miss Catlett still unmarried and still constant. After his second voyage they were married. In the excitement of these events he tended to forget his pious resolutions, though he still meant to keep them. But on one of his expeditions he saw a young man, an infidel just as

he had been, dying in terrible circumstances, friendless in Africa. The fear of death and the terrors of his conscience revived again. A dangerous illness at sea a few months after this finally awakened him from his inertia: and from this time on he entered on a life of rigid study and devotion. Every moment of his day was devoted to some useful employment; and such times as he could spare from his profession and his religion he occupied in teaching himself Latin from a pocket Horace. It must have been a curious scene—the ship moving with sails and rigging aslant against the stars, among the mysterious islands of that equatorial ocean, while the human cargo packed together like sheep sweltered in the hold below; and above, the captain paced the deck murmuring to himself the compact urbanities of Horace.

He persevered in this life for five or six years, but without achieving real satisfaction. The truth was that eighteenth-century orthodoxy did not appeal to his imagination: there was no place in it for that soul-absorbing passion necessary to his temperament. It regulated his life and saved him from the worst sufferings into which he had been led by his infidelity; but what he wanted was a doctrine that demanded the absolute surrender of every energy of mind and body.

One evening in 1754, when his ship was at anchor in the port of St. Christopher, he came across a Captain Clunie, who told him about Evangelicalism. Before the evening was over Newton had given himself up to this new creed as completely as he had to his love for Miss Catlett. Here at last was the religion he wanted: a creed that spoke to the heart, that commanded the undivided allegiance of the whole personality, that fired the imagination and gave scope to the desire for action. It was the turning-

point of his life: he had found what he had been looking for ever since he was ten years old. For the remaining forty years of his life every thought, feeling and action was dedicated, without a moment of doubt or faltering, to the faith of his choice. His life on board ship took on the ascetic rigour of a Trappist monastery. Every moment he was not working or sleeping he spent in prayer or reading the Bible, or instructing his crew in religion. His Latin studies were laid aside as useless frivolities. If he had female slaves on board he ate no meat for fear it might strengthen his flesh to lust after them. After a time he made up his mind to give up his profession: not, oddly enough, because he thought slavery wrong, but because it made him think too much about secular subjects. For five years he was a tide-surveyor at Liverpool, where he continued his religious studies, and where he managed to get to know Whitefield and Wesley and other evangelical leaders. Then in 1758 he decided to take orders. But here was a difficulty: he was not at all the sort of man who appealed to a Georgian bishop. Every bishop he asked refused to ordain him. Not only was he enthusiastic and not quite a gentleman, but it was rumoured that he thought a Nonconformist had as good a chance of Heaven as a member of the Established Church of England. Irritated at the rebuffs he received, Newton had thoughts of becoming a Congregationalist Minister. But Lord Dartmouth, the good angel of Evangelicalism, stepped in, procured his ordination and presented him to the living of Olney.

Conversion had given Newton incentive: ordination gave him scope. That virile vitality which had carried him triumphant through so many changes of fortune, enabling him to endure slavery, defeat sickness, and

survive the hardships of the mercantile marine, now poured itself with irresistible force into the avocations of an evangelical minister. He preached, taught, visited, and held prayer meetings; he wrote hymns and pamphlets, he even began an evangelical history of the world from its Creation, in order to combat the subversive views of Gibbon and Hume. But his most characteristic activity was his religious letters: all over England, with people of every sort—soldiers, politicians, schoolmasters, young ladies—Newton kept up a voluminous correspondence in which he advised them about every detail of their moral and spiritual lives. His advice was always long and generally impassioned, and when, as sometimes happened, it was given unasked, it was not well received; but on the already converted it made a tremendous impression. By the time he met Cowper, Olney was already one of the centres of the evangelical world.

His character is sufficiently shown forth by his story. He was primarily a man of action: if he thought he should do a thing, he did it, and he often did it without thinking about it at all. Nor did thought mean anything to him except in so far as it told him how to act. He was incapable of speculation or self-analysis. Reason was to him a weapon which he used, not very effectively, to confute his opponents. His own acts and opinion were directed not by reason but by un-analysed instinct. He had become an atheist because his instinct had reacted against religion. When instinct demanded religion again, he threw his atheism overboard, without even bothering to find replies to those arguments he had thought so formidable when his instinct had been on their side.

Yet he was not at all stupid. No one whose brain was not strong and clear could have taught himself Latin on a

ship with nothing but a copy of Horace to help him. Anything he took up, whether it was navigating, or preaching, or writing, he did well. But over and above all this, he had imagination. It is this quality that distinguishes his narrative from the truthful fictions of Defoe, which it resembles in outward incident: in the adventures, escapes, and the strange vicissitudes of its hero's fortunes. No one could be less like the business-like heroes of Defoe, with their matter-of-fact love affairs, their unshakeable nerve and the British common sense with which they confronted the most unlikely situations than this passionate, superstitious creature who was guided in the most momentous decisions by omens and prophetic dreams; who trembled before the baleful influence of the African moon, and was upheld through the blackest misfortunes and prevented from committing appalling crimes by the memory of a girl of sixteen whom he was convinced he would never see again. He was extraordinarily sensitive to the influence of nature: and he found in later life that only when alone in the country his soul could soar easily to heights of spiritual ecstasy. His letters, too, crude and absurd as they are, are full of flights of naïve fancy; there are touches of beauty, humour and intimacy in them only possible to a man of imagination.

Nor is this out of keeping with his character. The imagination is a thing of instinct rather than reason, and men of action have often more of it than men of thought. Hobbes had less imagination than Cromwell; Luther more than Erasmus. Newton, indeed, had more in common with these heroes of the Reformation than with his own contemporaries. Like theirs, his character was heroic and unsymmetrical, freaked with a Gothic quaintness, misted with a Gothic sublimity. He had their faults, too:

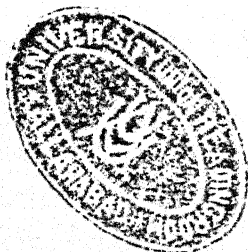
he was narrow and uncouth. In spite of his imagination he was not moulded out of fine clay: he could hardly have survived such a life if he had been. And in so far as he was not like Luther, he was the eighteenth-century sailor he looked—clumsy, careless, and insensitive. His kindness was generally tactless and his piety sometimes profane.

All his qualities, good and bad, remarkable or commonplace, were ever subservient to a single fanaticism. His whole life was a succession of slaveries to successive fixed ideas. After conversion, he was convinced that his own particular brand of religion was the best thing for anyone, anywhere, in any circumstances; and every word he uttered, whether serious or cheerful, trivial or important, whether connected with people, politics or gardening, had henceforth reference to religion. His very jokes were evangelical. This exclusive devotion was bound up with the strongest sides of his character—his will, his passion, his imagination, his faith. He would have given his life for his beliefs, without a thought; but he carried out the precepts of his creed so literally as to be at times both indecent and ridiculous. ‘Good news, indeed!’ he remarked, with conscientious joviality, on hearing of the death of his favourite niece. It might sound heartless, but it was evangelical, and therefore must be right. In his eyes, whatever could not be by some means or other forced into connection with his religion must necessarily be of the devil. ‘If there is any practice in the land sinful,’ he exclaimed, ‘then attendance at the theatre is so.’ And all he could see in the graceful symbolism of Venice’s Marriage to the Sea was ‘a lying, antiquated, Popish Bull.’

It is difficult to talk long about one subject without becoming boring; and Newton often did. He would have

given his life to save your soul, but nothing could persuade him not to thrust his views down your throat. He tended to become arrogant. There was only one God, and John Newton was His prophet; and though he was always repeating that he was sinful, he never admitted he was wrong. It was impossible to argue with him. His mind was, as it were, insulated by his faith; to anyone who is convinced they are inspired, logical objections must necessarily seem mere frivolous quibbling. If anyone asked Newton to explain a contradiction in his argument, he merely looked at him with the dreadful, glassy good-nature of the fanatic, forgave him for his error, and went on with his exhortation.

[*The Stricken Deer, a Life of William Cowper, by Lord David Cecil, will be published shortly by Messrs. Constable.—Ed.*]



OLIVER BRETT

A NOTE ON DR. JOHNSON'S
FIRST EDITIONS

Book collectors have no reason to be proud of their delayed recognition of Dr. Johnson. The critics, the reading public, even the general public who accept on hearsay and do not read, had placed Johnson and his Boswell among the classics long years before the collectors moved. It might have seemed obvious that the best biography in the language was worthy of a place in any collection, and that the personality of Johnson, permanently typical of his race, must always give value to the books he wrote. Pilgrims to the 'Cheshire Cheese' and to Johnson's house behind the Strand have never been wanting in numbers or enthusiasm; yet up to, and even after, the war these classic masterpieces of English prose could be bought for a song. The writer of this note bought the two great folios of the *Dictionary*, beautifully bound in contemporary calf, for £6, Boswell's *Life* for £15, and the rare first edition of *Rasselas* for £30 less than ten years ago. Anybody could have done the same. Booksellers say that they often had half a dozen unsaleable copies of the *Life* upon their shelves, and that they used to tear out the leaves of the *Dictionary* to wrap up the purchases of their customers.

No doubt the shadow of Macaulay's vitriolic essay, in which his hatred of Croker blinds him to the merit of Boswell, lay heavily upon Johnson and his circle. The classic eighteenth century had no appeal for the romantic Victorian collector. He paid high prices for the Elizabethans; he eagerly bought up the works of George Eliot,

Meredith and Stevenson. He could no more see the value of the eighteenth-century book than Ruskin could see the beauty of baroque architecture. He was not educated to see it, and he passed it by as the tourist on his way to Rothenburg and Heidelberg passes by the palaces of Wurzburg and Bamberg. Only the collector of unusual flair could see the opportunities of profit and pleasure staring him in the face.

Undoubtedly the change was brought about by the enthusiasm of an American collector. Mr. Newton, whose library in Philadelphia is only equalled by that of Mr. Wise in Hampstead, published his *Amenities of Book-Collecting* in 1918. Mr. Newton himself is like a character in Dickens, and he has the power of conveying into his writing the charm of his vital and humorous personality. Individual and independent himself, it is not surprising that Dr. Johnson should have become the object of his admiration. First possessing himself of a rare collection of Johnsonian first editions, he proceeded, by means of his book, to spread widely through the United States the tidings of his possessions. It was not long before prices began to respond to the trumpet of such advertisement, and eventually the boom, assisted by the revival of intellectual interest in classical art, covered not only Johnson and Boswell, but the whole range of eighteenth-century literature.

The effect of this boom upon prices is amazing. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, uncut, with the appendix, is now worth some £900; an ordinary bound copy £135. Both the *Rasselas* and the *London* are worth £250 each; the *Dictionary* £100, and the original numbers of *The Rambler* £90. In the last four years *Irene* has risen from £10 to £45, *Taxation No Tyranny* from £17 to £35, and *A*

Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland from £4 to £25. Good copies of the periodicals with which Johnson was concerned, *The Adventurer* and *The Idler*, fetch £40 apiece. Even now it is unlikely that these will remain the top prices. The world has been swept for copies of these books and, though few can now be found, the demand for them is constant.

In England collectors find it difficult to compete against the determination of America to possess the treasures of Europe. Johnson's house can show only the nucleus of a collection of his works, though obviously it should contain not only everything he wrote but a large selection of what has been written about him. It would be a pious, if expensive, objective to fill up the blank shelves in London before it is too late. Col. Isham, who bought the sensational casket of Boswell correspondence, has helped to keep alive the interest in Johnson throughout the United States. He had the ability to put the editorship of these documents in the hands of Mr. Geoffrey Scott, and several beautifully printed and carefully annotated volumes have already appeared. The price is high, seventeen volumes at £10 apiece. Nevertheless, even at such prices it seems probable that a profit can be made.

It would not be fitting to end even so rough a note as this without recording the loss which literature has sustained by the early death of Mr. Geoffrey Scott. In his short life he had already produced a brilliant essay upon baroque architecture, and a fascinating picture of eighteenth-century life. Lately he had turned his critical and fastidious mind on Dr. Johnson, the central intellectual figure of his time, and it is tragic that his work should so abruptly stop upon the threshold of great achievement.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

LOVE POETRY: A SUGGESTED ANTHOLOGY

There are many anthologies of love-poetry, but among them I have not found the one I want: one in which each poem is not only beautiful but an example of a different kind of love. The compiler of it must be as sensitive a judge of life as he is of poetry, and he must be something of a psychologist and a moralist. He must distinguish beforehand between all the different emotions called 'love', which is, by the bye, one of the most ambiguous terms in the language; he must try to discover what those emotions have in common—in short, write a preface on Love itself. Such an anthology would be of service not only to critics but to everybody, for 'poetry accommodates the shows of things to the mind', and from it we learn what man desires, though not what is within his reach. That is a different inquiry, and many who have followed it have ended by saying to the poet: 'Away! You speak to me of things which in all my life I have not found and shall not find.'

Treatises have been written on Love, but none I know would serve as a preface to the anthology I have in mind. Plato's 'Banquet' and the Phædrus and Lysis dialogues would be the best prelude only to an important section of it. I can mention another: that modern Platonist with a difference, Mr. Santayana, has written an admirable essay in *Poetry and Religion* upon the characteristic expressions of Platonic feeling as it rose again in a Christian age, proving itself to be 'nothing else than the

application to passion of that pursuit of something permanent in a world of change, of something absolute in a world of relativity, which is the essence of the Platonic philosophy.' This essay might serve as an introduction to another section. He has written, too, a chapter on Love in *The Life of Reason*, which is the most comprehensive view of the subject I know, though it is only thirty-four pages long. He limits the meaning of the word to imaginative passion, to what we call 'being in love', and excludes all other ways of loving. It will not, therefore, serve as the main introduction, for the anthology must display examples of other ways of loving.

The most important commentary in Mr. Santayana's chapter upon other writers on Love runs as follows: 'Love, to the lover, is a noble and immense inspiration; to the naturalist it is a thin veil and prelude to the self-assertion of lust. This opposition has prevented philosophers from doing justice to the subject. Two things need to be admitted by anyone who would not go wholly astray in such speculation: one, that love has an animal basis; the other, that it has an ideal object. Since these two propositions have usually been thought contradictory, no writer has ventured to present more than half of the truth, and that half out of its true relations. Plato, who gave eloquent expression to the ideal burden of the passion, and divined its political and cosmic message, passed over its natural history with a few mythical fancies; and Schopenhauer, with whose system a naturalistic treatment would have fitted so easily, allowed his metaphysics to carry him at this point into verbal inanities; while, of course, like all profane writers on the subject, he failed to appreciate the oracles which Plato had delivered. In popular feeling, where sentiment and observation must both make them-

selves felt somehow or other, the tendency is to imagine that love is an absolute, non-natural energy which, for some unknown reason, or for none at all, lights upon particular persons, and rests there eternally, as on its ultimate goal. In other words, it makes the origin of love divine and its object natural: which is the exact opposite of the truth.' This comment is illuminating.

How long shall men deny the flower
Because its roots are in the earth,
And crave with tears from God the dower
They have, and have despised as dearth,
And scorn as low their human lot,
With frantic pride, too blind to see
That standing on the head makes not
Either for ease or dignity!

These lines are not likely to be familiar to many modern readers, for they are from 'The Angel in the House'. Nevertheless they would find, if they looked, perhaps more curious, sincere and didactic love-lore in the works of Coventry Patmore than in almost any other English poet. 'The singer of bread-and-butter misses' is also an intransigent of passion-mystics. His range is wide, and his 'Unknown Eros' a Platonic dithyramb, which ends:

There lies the crown
Which all thy longing cures.
Refuse it, Mortal, that it may be yours:
It is a Spirit, though it seems red gold;
And such may no man, but by shunning, hold.
Refuse it, till refusing be despair;
And thou shalt feel the phantom in thy hair.

But Coventry Patmore would also figure in other sections than the Platonic. He attempted to be the poet of married love and of domesticity; but in spite of lovely passages and passages of curiously exact psychology, 'The Angel in the House' cannot be considered a success as a whole. It is marred by prosaic, even accidentally comic detail, and by a tone of uxurious condescension which is only brought into great relief by the *Dieu et ma Dame* adoration of other parts. Still, it is always the work of an exceedingly penetrating intellect passionately convinced that married love is a subject supremely worthy of the Muse. Patmore's attitude towards it, however, was unfortunately half-mystical, half prosaic; and affection-love, which should be the main theme of such a poet, escaped both sides of his nature. He was a fine Idealist, but an inferior Idolator. The distinction between these two kinds of lovers, Idealists and Idolators, would, in the anthology I have in mind, serve as the most comprehensive categories.

The Idealist transforms feeling towards a particular person into worship of an ideal beauty. The following sonnet, by Michelangelo, quoted in *Religion and Poetry*, is a good example:

My love's life comes not from this heart of mine.
The love wherewith I love thee hath no heart,
Turned thither whither no fell thoughts incline
And erring human passion leaves no smart.
Love, from God's bosom when our souls did part,
Made me pure eye to see, thee light to shine,
And I must needs, half mortal though thou art,
In spite of sorrow know thee all divine.
As heat in fire, so must eternity
In beauty dwell; through thee my soul's endeavour

Mounts to the pattern and the source of thee;
And having found all heaven in thine eyes,
Beneath thy brows my burning spirit flies
There where I loved thee first to dwell for ever.

Here it is the vision which the beloved inspires, not the beloved, that is important. On the other hand, in the case of the lover whom I have chosen to call the Idolator, emotion is centred upon a person. Poetry when it springs from this source is partly the poetry of exquisite appreciation; partly that of a relation, tragic, wistful, blissful or hopeful as the case may be, with that person. The last thing which could be said of this love is that it 'hath no heart'; though in reading such poetry we must remember that a poem is a work of art and that to an artist internal congruity is more important than fidelity to feeling.

It is usually inferior poetry which reflects that with complete fidelity. Nearly all the finest passion poems, Donne's for example, have, however, some tincture or element of this idolatry; while the Idealist, though he may have passed through that stage, when he seeks to express himself has become incapable of unreserved love of anything except something suggested by his experience. He has no intense desire to be loved in return. 'What is it to thee that I love thee' is a sentiment in harmony with idealistic love, but incongruous with idolatrous.

How large a part of the state of feeling which is commonly described as being in love is really a desire to be loved a minute's reflective recollection will show. It is the desire to be loved in return which distinguishes love from sympathy. Emile Faguet, who was an acute analyst of emotions as well as of ideas, went so far as actually to define 'love' as 'the desire to *be* loved'. This is not a

good definition, but it is a painful paradox; it fixes attention on the enormous importance in 'love' of that element contributed by the desire for reciprocity. Hence the truth of La Rochefoucauld's maxim, *Le plaisir de l'amour est d'aimer*—the *pain* springing from the desire to be loved. Affection unaccompanied by the desire to be loved, affection not born of that desire, is sympathy not 'love' at all. However keen it may be it leaves one calm, without disquiet—except in regard to the happiness and well-being of the person who is the object of it. The centre of one's being remains undisturbed. The perfection of this sympathy or affection is Christian love, and St. Paul called it 'charity'. This also must find expression in my anthology. It can be passionate, but it is not a *want*; while the affection which is born of a need for affection drags at the life of whosoever feels it. Christian love is not only a most beautiful, but obviously in certain circumstances the most helpful emotion which one human being can feel towards another. Idealistic love, on the other hand, is no cure for another's loneliness: it does not even imply the smallest fidelity. Many people who have been the object of it have discovered this, and shown that they have done so by remaining unmoved; preferring, sometimes to the astonishment of admirers of the poet-lover, a most inferior adorer. But it is also true that it is only in certain circumstances that even Christian love, which is the most exalted form of sympathy, can compete with that love which is born of a desire to be loved. When the former stops short of sublimity, though it may still be capable of the most exquisite consideration, its nature is immediately clear to the person concerned, though an onlooker may wonder at a more exacting egotistic love being preferred. Sympathy, even the most perfect, may deceive but can-

not satisfy one in whom affection is born of the need for affection.

We should have, then, to distinguish also in this anthology between the love poems which sprang from sympathy, from the lightest or most playful kind to those expressing close and even tragic understanding, from those love poems born of a need to be loved. What further classifications would have to be made—they are too many to discuss here, even if I could remember them—may be suggested by recalling famous, though never completely satisfactory, definitions of love. They are not completely satisfactory, because in writing of love every author is apt to give us a scrap of autobiography, and to serve up as a definition what is really a description of the kind with which he was himself best acquainted. Let us take, therefore, first, La Rochefoucauld's, who was an observer freer from that bias than most.

'Il est difficile de définir l'amour: ce qu'on en peut dire est que, dans l'âme, c'est une passion de régner; dans les esprits, c'est une sympathie; et, dans le corps, ce n'est qu'une envie cachée et délicate de posséder ce que l'on aime, après beaucoup de mystères.'

The merit of this definition for our purpose, is that by splitting love up as it were into spectrum-bands of colour which to amount to love must blend together into homogeneous light, it offers suggestions for further classifications. There are certainly poems in which 'the passion to reign' is a stronger tincture than 'sympathy', and *vice versa*. This definition of love also introduces what has been barely touched on, the animal basis of love. It is clear that 'L'envie de posséder ce que l'on aime' is in some poetry neither 'hidden' nor 'delicate', while in

others it is, though there, almost completely concealed by 'beaucoup de mystères'.

And there is another definition of love which might be of help: 'Love in its plenitude is the desire to possess and be possessed.' This would obviously also be of use to the anthologist, because these two desires, chiefly in poems of passion, are often unequally mixed. There are passion-poems where the desire to possess triumphs completely over the desire to be possessed, and again, others in which the latter desire completely predominates. The poetry springing from the first kind of passion is usually marked by a violent splendour shot with brief tenderness, while that which springs from the second is all subjection. Both these types of passion would seem to anyone who accepted the above definition not to be 'love' at all; seem in the one case merely an exaltation of self masquerading as 'love', and in the other, feebleness pretending to be it, for according to that definition the two desires 'to possess and be possessed' must coexist in equal strength in the lover. The anthologist, however, who must be as impartial as a naturalist, would not pay attention to the value of the emotions expressed.

I do not think that Stendhal's famous book on *L'Amour* would be much help to him. Stendhal says there are only four kinds of love! (1) Passion-love, the kind he is interested in. (2) Gallant love, 'into which nothing disagreeable may enter under any pretext whatsoever, at the cost of a lapse of etiquette, of good taste, refinement, etc.' (3) Physical love, for which lust is the short name. (4) Vanity-love.

Gallant love is, from a literary point of view, quite an important variety: it is a sort of minuet of the emotions ending with a kiss. Lust, though exercising an important

influence on love, and standing often in the same relation to it as water does to steam, is not strictly speaking love at all, yet I would have it also represented in this anthology, in its Lucretian form, as

The all-generating powers and genial heat
Of Nature,

and in its more idiosyncratic manifestations.

By Vanity-love, Stendhal meant those affairs in which the main motive is the desire, either to rouse envy in others, or to feel, 'Well, *I* have got this'. This is very remotely connected with the subject. Vanity, however, especially in an intimate personal way, which Stendhal never goes into, is often inextricably mingled with desire for a particular person. This vanity when gratified may produce transports, or when wounded acute misery: a misery deserving more compassion than it usually gets. For it is desolating to find, after perhaps being more amiable and more your best than ever before, that another is preferred. What makes matters worse is that vanity, by a law of its own nature, conceals from itself the seat of the injury. Thus the sufferer cannot tell whether he, or she, is suffering from humiliation or a broken heart. But though vanity has its transports and miseries hard to distinguish from within from those of love, they are not the same. They do not really belong to the subject, though they are reflected in much indifferent love poetry.

Passion-love, of course, is a very different matter. The poets who have written it would probably contribute more items than any other poets within the great class of Idolators. Yet passion is far rarer in life than it is in literature. Even of the comparatively few capable of

feeling it, many reasonably conclude that passion makes nonsense of the rest of their lives. Consequently they run away from it. Yet it is a pity it should not be more common than it is in spite of that, because it is often a man's or a woman's only chance of feeling life with the excitement of an artist; and those who have never felt anything at all like it are apt to remain, however intelligent in other ways, stupid about human nature in some directions. It differs from lust in the intensity with which the personality of the object is apprehended, and in being also an excitement of the whole being; it is therefore not satisfied so simply as lust. It differs from other kinds of love in that its connection with sex is intensely direct, and not necessarily accompanied by contemplation of the beloved as good, or by a strong desire for his or her welfare—apart from the satisfaction of itself.

It is, however, the distant possibility of this state of emotion which lends charm and excitement to all light loving. When it actually comes nearer, one or both lovers are apt to turn tail: one of them often with feelings of bitterness towards the other who blenched first. It is most frequently felt by those who are lonely: whether loneliness is produced by circumstances or inward stress of mind, by place or by imagination, or the emotional distance which work or temperament keeps people from the big, common world. The expression of passion is easily recognizable in literature. It may have great beauty, but it has not often an absolute perfection. It is different in that respect from Idealistic love, or, on the other hand, the gaiety of self-delighting desire, both of which have frequently found perfect expression. Yet the passionate lover is nearest akin to the Idealistic lover, though he is so different. He is nearer to the Platonist than

the affection-lover is, and they understand each other better. The respective claims of passion and affection, each wanting different things, are often audible in poetry; in this short poem by Mr. Yeats their voices are beautifully blended yet distinct, and passion has the last word.

'Put off that mask of burning gold
With emerald eyes.'

'O no, my dear, you make so bold
To find if hearts be wild and wise,
And yet not cold.'

'I would but find what's there to find,
Love or deceit.'

'It was the mask engaged your mind,
And after set your heart to beat,
Not what's behind.'

'But lest you are my enemy,
I must enquire.'

'O no, my dear, let all that be,
What matter, so there is but fire
In you, in me?'

Love seen in the light of the comic spirit must not be overlooked. Poems in which jollity, sceptical release from infatuation, absurd disasters, shocks resembling the sensation of lifting an apparently heavy jug and finding it jerk upwards in the hand, have found expression—such poems must find in the anthology an important place. Rochester and the Restoration poets have supplied some excellent poems in that vein; Rochester especially, since he was also a good 'true-love' poet. And if we could find good ones, comic erotic poems must be included, though comic eroticism has been best treated in prose—in

Rabelais, in *The Arabian Nights*. This type of literature, when it is literature, is an important medicine to the mind in its most emptily portentous moods, a fact which our censors forget.

But the section over which the anthologist must take most trouble is that of affection-love. It is the element in experience which in the long run does most to make life happy. Mixed as this poetry must inevitably be with particularities and realities, and rare as the emotion it expresses is in that last refinement necessary to making it a fit theme, this section will present many difficulties to the selector. It was Rossetti who discovered that the 'leading point about Coleridge's work is its human love':

To be beloved is all I need
And when I love I love indeed,

he wrote of himself. And what makes him pre-eminent as a delineator of affection-love is that his need of it was so great; while his apprehension of the conditions which make the complete satisfaction of that need possible, is more subtle than any other poet's. (Patmore is a bungler compared with him in that respect.) I am not thinking of Coleridge's 'Genevieve', but of those moods in which his poetry is often saturated and lend so peculiar a quality to every reference in them to personal relations with either man or woman. To illustrate by quotation from his verse would take too much space; but a passage from the prose Introduction to 'The Improvisatory' (a poem seldom read) will serve:

FRIEND: . . . Love, as distinguished from Friendship, on the one hand, and from the passion that too often usurps its name, on the other.

LUCIUS [*Eliza's brother, who had just joined the trio, in a whisper to the Friend*]: But is not Love the union of both?

FRIEND [*aside to Lucius*]: He never loved who thinks so. . . . Well then, I was saying that love, truly such, is itself not the most common thing in the world: and mutual love still less so. But that enduring personal attachment . . . in addition to a depth and constancy of character of no everyday occurrence, supposes a peculiar sensibility and tenderness of nature; a constitutional communicativeness and utterancy of heart and soul; a delight in the detail of sympathy, in the outward and visible signs of the sacrament within—to count, as it were, the pulses of the life of love. But above all, it supposes a soul which, even in the pride and summer-tide of life—even in the lustihood of health and strength, had felt oftenest and prized highest that which age cannot take away, and which, in all our lovings, is *the Love*.

ELIZA: There is something here [*pointing to her heart*] that seems to understand you, but wants the word that would make it understand itself.

KATH.: I, too, seem to feel what you mean. Interpret the feeling for us.

FRIEND: I mean that willing sense of the unsufficingness of the self for itself, which predisposes a generous nature to see, in the total being of another, the supplement and completion of its own—that quiet perpetual seeking which the presence of the beloved object modulates, not suspends, where the heart momentarily finds, and, finding, again seeks on—lastly, when 'life's changeful orb has pass'd the full', a confirmed faith in the nobleness of humanity, thus brought home and pressed, as it were, to

the very bosom of hourly experience; it supposes, I say, a heartfelt reverence for worth, not the less deep because divested of its solemnity by habit, by familiarity, by mutual infirmities, and even by a feeling of modesty which will arise in delicate minds, when they are conscious of possessing the same or the correspondent excellence in their own characters. In short, there must be a mind, which, while it feels the beautiful and the excellent in the beloved as its own, and by right of love appropriates it, can call Goodness its playfellow.

The whole of this dialogue might serve as an introduction to poems of affection.

READERS' REPORTS

NEW NOVELS

A Modern Comedy, by John Galsworthy (*Heinemann. 8s.6d.*). It is not uncommon to find readers who have mastered the entire *Forsyte Saga*, taken it down unwincing at a single gulp. There exists, indeed, a formidable-looking India-paper collected edition for those who are inclined to such digestive feats. Mr. Galsworthy is the salvation of contemporaries who dislike to have it thought that they cannot abide heavy reading, that the higher flights of literature are not for them. 'So I decided not to go out after all, and went to bed with *The Forsyte Saga*. . . .' How well that declaration sounds! Yet it is a curious fact that critics, who can absorb the complete saga-sequence betwixt London and Aberdeen, have usually 'not time' for other and, perhaps, more important works.

In some way, it is all so remarkably safe—safe, but not tame. Teeming with ideas; but whereas real ideas are as dangerous or more dangerous than wild animals, and the brain of a great novelist or a great poet is a jungle in which you may be surprised and severely mauled, escaping with clawmarks which you bear to your dying day, your self-respect torn to ribbons, Mr. Galsworthy, when he pounces, does so with an odd gentleness. As a revolutionary, he is like the wild beast in a fairy-tale which a child instantly recognizes, exclaiming: 'Oh, but that is a *good lion*!', thereafter resolutely refusing to be frightened. Even Home Secretaries have been heard to accept his advice. He is now accredited '*good lion*' to the whole British Empire; he attacks our institutions, mumbles and chaws over our national complacency. But it is

all make-believe; really, we know, he wouldn't hurt a fly. None the less, it is stimulating; 'he makes one think', ejaculates a flustered subaltern who has been taken to see *Loyalties*. When we unearth our great modern novelist, he will tell us that all subalterns are intellectual and that they all graduate from Galsworthy. For the author of the *Forsyte Saga*, who has debated so many momentous social questions, is a scaremonger warranted not to be over-exciting. His reader is Daniel in the lions' den, where the lions are guaranteed perfectly harmless. He knocks us out with his problem and brings us round again with something dangerously like a cliché.

Mr. Galsworthy's latest problem, evinced in three novels, *The White Monkey*, *The Silver Spoon*, *Swan Song*, here collected to form a single book, is what he calls 'modernity'. Of course, there had to be a younger generation; yet, when we come to consider it closely, comparing the young men of the present generation with the various generations which have preceded it, the generation which ushered in the last century, the young men of the 'thirties and the 'nineties, the young men even of the Edwardian Era, we may begin to doubt whether the strangeness and wildness generally imputed to them has not something to do with the almost daily increasing silliness of the popular press. The paragraph-writer must make his living somehow; *Punch* and its cartoonists must continue to feed the Vestal flicker of 'clean fun'. But the novelist should not make *Punch* his social historian; and by what other hypothesis are we to explain the language which Mr. Galsworthy puts into the mouths of his dashing young people? Who else can have taught him, for example, that, when a modernist painter comes 'gliding and glowing' across the threshold and is informed that

his hostess's Pekingese has been licking the copper floor, he should remark 'But how perfectly Chinese!' following this up with a lapse into the original Forsyte dialect: 'Phew! By George! Those eyes! Where did you pick it up, Sir?' referring to a picture on the wall; that an advanced young man discussing a book should describe it as 'getting quite marvellously nowhere'; that expressions like 'some stunt', 'the governor', 'I'm nuts on' something or somebody, are still widely employed; and that modern young ladies have a depth of conviction which would enable them to stand up in the witness-box and argue points of 'current morality' with a learned judge?

Equally bogus, or having the same rather equivocal relation to the truth, is Mr. Galsworthy's picture of social change. Scandals of that sort 'in Society', ponders the Marquess over his newspaper, 'are a nail in our coffins'. Indeed, the entire *Modern Comedy* resounds with birth-pangs and the knocking-in of coffin-nails; but, just as the novelist's desperate anxiety to seem conversant with the idiosyncrasies of modern youth makes him crowd his pages with defunct colloquialisms, so his desire to seem to have his finger on the main pulses of modern life induces him to swamp his story in spurious contemporary atmosphere. If a novelist wishes to suggest a background of social change, he must leave his characters to build it up themselves, but as gradually and unobtrusively as possible. Mr. Galsworthy prepares his atmosphere—the slang, the modernist furnishings, the divorces, the night-clubs, the Martinis—then tosses in his characters to sink or swim like a basket-load of struggling kittens.

The gesture is magnificent—if the reader does not stand too close. Foreigners are delighted; no discussion of English literature is complete without some reference to

'your great novelist, John Galsworthy'; and here a new reason may be proposed. We do not realize, all of us, what strange creatures we appear to our Continental neighbours, not only colder, stiffer, more hypocritical, but mysteriously of alien flesh and blood. Well, in *The Forsyte Saga*, which purports to display a deep section of English social characteristics, the intelligent foreign reader finds his delusions carried out to the life. It has the fascination of a window full of stuffed animals and clock-work toys described by one of the inmates. Fascinating to watch old silver-haired Nobodaddy Forsyte jerkily pottering about like those mechanical mannikins which choose their steps with so much dignity and decision, then tumble headlong and give up the ghost with a loud whirr! From inside the window, though, it is another matter, Mr. Galsworthy has laboured at his huge composition, but it is none of it quite satisfactory. His 'fine writing' bears the same relation to genuinely good writing as an admirably produced machine-made article does to a similar article made by hand. His prophesying is too deliberate to convince; he puts the prophetic attitude before the prophetic utterance; his intention is always solemn, yet the effect he makes is never wholly serious. There is something in his *Modern Comedy*, the portentous title and the pompous content, which sends the sawdust coursing angrily through our veins. P. Q.

José Antonio Páez, by R. B. Cunninghame Graham (*Heinemann*. 15s.). José Antonio Páez, the liberator of Venezuela, was by profession a cowboy. He was twenty years of age when, in 1811, Venezuela declared itself independent of Spain: and by his genius for guerrilla warfare, his loyalty and personal prestige, rose to the first place in

the new Republic. He was, however, less fortunate as a statesman than as a soldier. The Venezuelan patriots, when they had got rid of Spain, were not long in falling out among themselves: they split into federalists and separationists, and Páez adhered to the latter party. He was exiled, returned in triumph after ten years' absence, was again defeated, and finally died in exile at the age of eighty-three. From the day of his flight, at seventeen, to the desolate Llanos, his life had been a long and wild adventure. He had known poverty and every kind of hardship: he had fought armies (one is tempted to say) single-handed, had created a nation, and been the guest of kings, and had then been reduced, in his extreme old age, to turn commercial traveller for a living. But his natural simplicity had been proof against vicissitude. He was of the poorest birth and for long almost illiterate: yet his opinions were liberal and moderate, his respect for learning unaffected and open: and he continued democratic, both in habits and principle, though raised to absolute power.

In short, he is obviously a Conrad character, and his biography is the raw material of *Nostromo*. Raw, indeed, it is. Proportion has fallen a victim to Mr. Cunninghame Graham's romantic taste: the political side is scamped; so is the personal side; everything, indeed, which can be regarded as serious. From one point of view, the book is all background. The riding and dancing and fighting, the single combats and chivalrous victories, robbers put down, wild men won over, the exploits of Theseus and the paladins re-enacted on the burning plains of the new world—that is all Mr. Cunninghame Graham really likes. Yet he is too much cumbered with history to write the saga frankly on those lines. His book, therefore, is not

at all points a success, nor consistently entertaining. At worst, however, it has character, and at its best a great deal of spirit. So has its style, though marred by truculence, some lack of judgement and a kind of guerrilla struggle with English grammar. Only the criticisms of life with which Mr. Graham seasons his narrative are without any kind of merit.

Wolsey, by A. F. Pollard, M.A., Hon. Litt.D., F.B.A. (Longmans. 21s.). Professor Pollard has given us the real Wolsey. To do this he has had to make a generous discount from various later glosses upon Wolsey's glory. It is a doctrine of Signor Croce's that 'all history is contemporary history'; hence Rymer, in Queen Anne's reign, and Fiddes, soon after, attributed to Wolsey the conception of 'that protean phantom', the Balance of Power; the discovery of Wolsey as England's first great war minister dates from the last great war; Brewer assigned to him the overture to Disraeli's operatic 'Peace with Honour'; and 'the limelight of an ecclesiastical controversy' gave him the rather odd illumination of 'Legate and Reformer'. The truth is that history has its big men, apart from its great men: and amongst the biggest of the big—Hampton Court, which was only one of his four huge palaces, assures us of this—looms Wolsey. Indeed, we cannot escape from him. His supposed features still stare at us from advertisements: he has the indignity of a modern market-value: and 'to-day we are more intimate with wolsey than we are with brougham carriages, wellington boots, or gladstone bags'. Yet there would seem to be something of a just retribution in this: after a close scrutiny of his amazing career, Dr. Pollard can but say, and say very finely: 'When he looked upon

the travail of his soul he found no satisfaction because there was no sacrifice. His dignity consisted in his dignities, his honour in his honours, and his welfare in his wealth.'

Yet, of ability, of forcefulness, of will-power, he was so plenteously possessed that we cannot but marvel that the England of his day, and its king as well, endured and even fostered—Dr. Pollard does not say too much about the latter—a mighty energy whose only goal at home was self-aggrandisement and money, and whose foreign policy had but one aim, his own elevation to the Papacy. Dr. Pollard's admiration of Henry VIII shows signs of attaining to Creighton's cult of Elizabeth, Carlyle's of Cromwell, Airy's of Charles II, and Macaulay's of William III. As a scientific historian, however, he never blinks nor distorts facts adverse to his real hero; but he goes no farther than merely to record them, and his method is 'penny plain' with Henry, 'twopence coloured' with Wolsey. The result is that a reader coming fresh to the subject of this book would hardly be aware that there was another actor on the scenes, as 'big' as the Cardinal, and as little worried ordinarily by scruples, yet possessing three assets which his Minister lacked: a patriotism which kept time with the quickening beat of the national pulse, a puzzling conscience which worked at intervals, and the power of saying the last word. This partial obliteration of Henry, whom we are aware Dr. Pollard regards as a very great man indeed, yet of whose talents, passions, and mean vulgarity we obtain but fleeting glimpses, is the one blemish in a brilliant and powerful study, a study which must inevitably orientate anew, for any careful student, his views of the English Reformation.

For Wolsey, like Jehu, drove furiously; and as legate

a latere of the Pope he rode papal jurisdiction in England to its death. In this sense, but in none other, he was '*l'auteur du schisme*', as the eighteenth-century legend on the Arras portrait describes him. The truth was that he antagonized every interest in England—Parliament, the nobility, the Common Law, the Church itself—by his ruthless self-assertion. Into his jurisdiction he swept the Chancellery, with its lucrative wardship of young heirs, the 'Prime Ministership', the direct embassy from Rome, the Primacy of York, two fat bishoprics, the richest abbacy in the land, and every other plurality he could lay his hands upon, and by his concentration of jurisdictions, and spoliations for his palaces and colleges, he conveyed to the attentive ears of a partly parvenu monarch and a crowd of completely parvenu courtiers valuable hints for a supreme headship and estates to be had for the grasping. Cranmer's seemingly Christian remark about the lowly origin of himself and so many of his compeers was, like so much of Cranmer's Christianity, not without a very practical significance to the horde of new men who, following in the wake of the detested butcher's son of Ipswich, without a tithe of his ability, proceeded to raid England.

It is said to be the mark of a good judge to amplify his jurisdiction. If so, Wolsey was the greatest of Chancellors, and every sort of power centred in him. England, which loves a moral lesson, has taken an odd pride in his dazzling glory, an odd gratification in his headlong fall. The *post hoc, propter hoc* has ruled; and ideals and policies of which Wolsey never dreamed have been facilely tacked on to his fame. The last words, in which he compared his service to his God with his service to his King, have become one of the clichés of English history. It was an age

of gestures and phrases, veiling an inveterate sordidness of action. Even the bovine Duke of Suffolk gave vent to an aphorism, and a characteristically false one, when the multi-millionaire Cardinal was nearing his doom. But then Dr. Pollard has proved that the last, and much-belauded, phase of Wolsey's pastoral work in his neglected see, or at least on the border of one of his sees, was a sham. And, on the other hand, he does not emphasize a grateful monarch's filching of Hampton Court and York Place, the insistent demand from the dying statesman of the last wad of money he was supposed to have secreted, and the secret designation, not of Esher, but of the Tower, as the real goal of his final piteous journey.

We rejoice in one feature of Professor Pollard's book. As in his *Factors of American History*, so here he has shown himself a master of the illuminating foot-note. Taking to heart the opposite warnings of the arid *Cambridge Modern History*, and of 'foot-and-mouth-note' disease, he gives us just what we want. It is not jest, but a tragedy that he has supplied us with, but again and again the foot-notes are its cream. The whole makes a curious record, told with consummate power, of the dominance of one big man, with the shadow of another big man in the background. The big man lives for self, never 'touches wood', reaps at last no comfort from the 'desert of his soul', dies, and is buried.

THE MYSTERY OF THE BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB

It may be no mystery at all. It may be that when Professor Gordon is quoted as saying that *The Mystery of the Roman Hat*, by Ellery Queen (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.), is 'certainly the best detective story which your committee

has had submitted to it', he is only disguising, in language suitable for the Press, the fact that this is the only detective story which has yet been submitted to the Book of the Month Club. If, however, this is not the explanation, then the mysterious ways of his committee are, I fear, incapable of solution. For *The Mystery of the Roman Hat* is not a good novel, but a bad one; so bad, indeed, that if it were not for the publicity which it is obtaining, and the hall-mark which this mysterious committee has set upon it, it would not be worth the trouble of analysing.

In the first place, it is nearly barren of detection. There are two incidents which might be called pieces of detection, viz. the discovery of the whereabouts of the missing hat, and its actual finding in the murderer's flat. Neither of these should have occupied a competent detective for more than five minutes or three pages at the outside, but they are allowed to take up enormous space in the story, because (a) an American detective, it would seem, when asked to search a theatre, confines his attention to the auditorium, and does not think of going behind the scenes, and (b) when an American detective goes to search a man's flat and finds therein a large four-poster bed with curtains hanging round it and reaching to the ceiling, he does not look on the top of the bed for the object of his search, but prefers to rip up the furniture, poke down the drain-pipes, etc., and finally to sit down in despair until a brilliant piece of ratiocination by his amateur assistant suggests that he should look in the place in which an intelligent housemaid would have looked at once. Secondly, the story is stuffed full of minor improbabilities. We are asked to believe, for example, that a blackmailer chose to conceal

the papers relating to his victims in hats marked with those victims' names—in case, I suppose, he forgot whom he was at the moment blackmailing—and took one of these hats with him when he went to meet the blackmailee. Did he then hold the hat in his hands all the time? If he went to a club to lunch, did he refuse to enter the cloak-room? Or how did he prevent a hat, marked with someone else's name, from getting out of his possession? Why did he not put the papers in his pocket, like any other human creature? Again, the murderer, it is supposed, gave his victim a dose of a poison, about whose effects he must have been doubtful, since it is clearly stated in the book that it had never been used on a human being. He then, instead of making his escape, sat beside his victim for about a quarter of an hour (during which time the victim is assumed to have convulsed himself silently), and departed, *after* which the victim observed to a neighbour that he had been murdered—and expired. Very convenient, but not very probable; and these two are not the only cases of improbability.

Thirdly, the explanation given at the end proves that, from about page 100 onwards, the detective knew perfectly well who the criminal was, but was unable to share his knowledge with the reader, because that would have involved bringing the story to an abrupt end. The remaining two hundred pages do not provide a single clue, or add anything to the detective's store of information; they are just padding. Fourthly, there is no character-drawing at all; the detectives, of whom, as in most American detective-novels, there are far too many, fall over one another without distinction; and the other characters, murderer and all, do not exist. There is, it is

true, an attempt to ascribe some characteristics by Mr. Ellery Queen; but his attempt produces only a faint copy of the detective invented by Mr. Van Dine. Finally, the style is pretentious to the last degree. In short, the plot is thin and poor, and honeycombed with improbabilities, the detection almost *nil*, and the style and characters in harmony with the detection.

Why, then, should this book be praised? I can suggest one reason only, that it possesses a kind of spurious realism which is fairly frequently to be found nowadays when intellectual writers without the gift of the storyteller take to writing detective-novels. They know nothing about character, but they know a good deal about journalism, about the subjects on which highbrows converse, and those which highbrows know all about, and they get their remarks on those subjects correct. If they elect to write about racing, they know all the jargon of the racing man, and they use this knowledge judiciously to bemuse the reader into the belief that they know all about racing-men—which is not in the least the same thing. They know the patter, and that is all; and though this patter, combined with an ability for construction, can sometimes make a very successful product—as *Broadway* was successful—by itself the patter wears very thin indeed. America, whence the author of *The Mystery of the Roman Hat* emanates, has invented an excellent word for this sort of thing. In America they call it 'smart-aleckism'. It is a pity that the committee of the Book Club has apparently fallen for it.

Lord Gorell's new book, *Devil's Drum* (Murray. 7s. 6d.), does not suffer from smart-aleckism. In fact, one could almost wish that he had drawn a little more inspiration from *Broadway* and a little less from (apparently) the

most minor works of Wilkie Collins. In *Devil's Drum* the long-dead characters of the yellow-back rise again and move—but, unfortunately, very stiffly—across the stage. I have read of bold, bad baronets who soliloquized, but not for many years have I met so bold and so bad a baronet as his Sir Gerald, or so clinging, so helpless, and so feeble-minded a heroine as Sir Gerald's wife. Nor do the purple passages of description, reading rather as though they had been cut from the *Holiday Haunts* of the Great Western Railway, fail to recall Victorian originals. As to the plot, it is simple. There are two undisclosed facts: one is obvious to the reader from the start, and is actually explained half-way through. As soon as it is explained, the other becomes clear as daylight; it is revealed at the end. Lord Gorell started by writing a pleasant and ingenious book, *D. E. Q.*; he has written others of some merit. Why does he now present us with this unfortunate pastiche?

We next come to three shockers.

The Vandekkers, by Russell Thorndike (*Thornton Butterworth*. 7s. 6d.), is a frightfully shocking shocker. There is a wicked lady, who kept an octopus in a pool, and trained him to eat everyone that she did not like. Incidentally, if the life of the octopus corresponded to the section of it shown in the book, the poor creature must have been horribly overfed. There is also an old gentleman with a ladder, who climbs up and looks into the windows of those about to die—but his reason for this strange amusement is not mentioned. Mr. Thorndike has a mind with a cheerful delight in horrors, and has read his Stevenson. He obviously enjoyed writing this book; but he should not make his horrors so starkly incredible. Mr. Farjeon's incredibilities, in *Underground* (*Collins*. 7s. 6d.), are no less,

though they obtrude themselves less because the temperature of his imagination is much lower than that of Mr. Thorndike's, and his people are not intended to be monsters out of the Elder Edda. He writes cheerfully, he causes no strain on the intelligence, and he knows, as one who has had much practice, how to begin a story in an interesting manner. Unfortunately, his story happens to be a silly one. *MW-XX3*, by Roland Pertwee (*Heinemann*. 7s. 6d.), is a story about a general strike, an important formula, and an international conspiracy. It is thus 'after' Mr. John Buchan in his later manner. It moves quite fast.

Speedy Death, by Gladys Mitchell (*Gollancz*. 7s. 6d.), is an odd book. It is not good, but its defects are not the ordinary defects. Principally, the trouble is that the lady's characters behave in such a peculiar way. Murders and murderous attempts happen in a country house; but nobody is at all perturbed, and the master of the house says merely, 'This place is becoming tiresome; I shall go away'—and does. This might have been intended to suggest his villainy, but he is not a villain; in fact, he has no part in the story. The same applies to the other characters; they are not characters, but neither are they stocks; they are half-imagined freaks. If this is Miss Mitchell's first book, she is worth watching; her female psycho-analyst is a nasty old ~~thing~~ who might well turn into a genuine character.

Lastly comes a really good book with a bad title, *The Defendant Soul*, by Charles Forrest (*Benn*. 7s. 6d.). This is not Mr. Forrest's first book, nor the first time he has shown both his ability to write and his firm grasp of human character. It is not a detective story in the sense that there is any doubt about the criminal; but only in

the sense that we are watching, through the medium of the author, the way in which the crime came about, and why it was never detected. It is the story of a murderess, of the daughter of a market-gardener who married another market-gardener with tendencies to religion, killed his mistress, saw her husband tried for the crime and found not guilty; and was never brought to justice. These are the bald facts of the book; but the story is not about the bald facts. It is about the mind of Arabella Cole, the murderess, about her emotional husband, who had the artistic temperament in the body of a chapel-going greengrocer, about her old parents-in-law, who were so accustomed to being failures in business that they became walking ravens of ill-omen to any one who had a breath of success, about Arabella's

Impeccable taste demands

DE RESZKE

The Aristocrat of Cigarettes

American - 25 for 1/10

American de Luxe 25 for 2/-

De Reszke *Virginias* 20 for 1/-

Tenor (Turkish) 25 for 3/2

Egyptian Blend 20 for 2/-

De Reszke *Turks* 20 for 1/-

J. MILLHOFF & CO. LTD., 86 PICCADILLY, W.1

sensible old confidante, about the chapel elders who so shrewdly summed up George Cole's weaknesses and George Cole's wife, and about the respected citizen who knew the truth—and could not tell it. Readers who object to the 'unreality' of crime fiction should make a point of reading Mr. Forrest.

The Mystery of the Widow Lerouge (Gollancz. 3s. 6d.) is not Gaboriau's best book; but it is well worth reprinting, and pleasant to have now in a readable form and a reasonable translation.

The Rambling Sailor, by Charlotte Mew (*The Poetry Bookshop*. 3s. 6d.). Women have not often been great poets, but they often have had one or two special qualifications. If their poetry has been narrow, on the other hand, it has been seldom flat; and in that narrow space—feeling, moreover, no call to be vigorous—they can the more easily achieve a high degree of finish. Charlotte Mew's verse is a distinguished example of this class: ladylike, intense, rather confined; with only here and there a spirited and lucky venture into the objective. Her style is sophisticated, but single; an instrument evidently not valued for itself, contrived merely to render in each poem one vibration of sincere feeling, not very loud.

Time Importuned, by Sylvia Townsend Warner (Chatto & Windus. 5s.). These poems have so much more form than feeling that many of them read like prosodic exercises. They are sophisticated almost to a shadow, often charmingly handled, and flavoured by the wit that gives an edge to her novels, as in the title of the *Sad Shepherd*, but terribly apt, on the least attempt at emotion, to strike false notes.

LIFE AND LETTERS



THE END OF WAR?

A correspondence between the Author of *All Quiet on the Western Front* and General Sir Ian Hamilton,
G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

To the historian, the year 1929-30 will be chiefly remarkable as that in which men's emotions first began to turn vigorously against the idea of war. It may seem strange that such an emotional change should have been so long delayed, but the fact is that men can only bear to examine painful events which have receded a little into the past, and there is natural unwillingness to disparage military glory while bereavement is fresh. Symptoms of this change of attitude are cropping up on every hand. One of them is the sudden and unexpected revival of interest in the actualities of war all over Europe. Books which a year or so ago no publisher could hope to sell, either in this country or in any other, are now read eagerly by hundreds of thousands. Of these, England has contributed a notable one, *Undertones of War*, by Edmund Blunden. But *All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque, has made the deepest and widest impression of any. The following number of copies have been sold (the figures are some months old):

Germany	850,000
Denmark and Norway	60,000
America	215,000
Finland	5,000
France	300,000
Holland	50,000
Rumania	6,000
Sweden	50,000
Spain	25,000
Czecho-Slovakia	20,000
England	300,000

That in France more copies should have been sold than in America is significant, though this may be partly due (the Americans appear to be the world's worst translators) to the inferiority of the American version.

Although the great majority of those who have read *All Quiet on the Western Front* have regarded it as a most salutary book, strengthening aversion from war, others have suspected the author of a desire to exploit horrors for their own sake. Messrs. Putnam, its publishers over here, have shown me a huge packet of press-cuttings. Among them are passages from Service magazines translated from derogatory comments published in Germany, a pleasing example of professional solidarity. These were sent to Herr Remarque, and it is interesting to see the way he has taken them. Writing on September 15th, from Berlin, he says:

I thank you for the Press notices sent to me, which contained several things new to me. I learned from the interview in the *Observer*, of 8th September, that Herr Moissi pretends to have known me well, and to have said that I am twenty-six years old. I have not the

slightest acquaintance with Herr Moissi and am unfortunately five years older than that.

Again I find gossip-paragraphs in various papers, about which I have been asked questions sometimes by the Berlin correspondents of English publications. To this I can only say that I consider it really unnecessary to take any notice of tittle-tattle which is due to ignorance, envy, hatred, or love of sensation. In Germany, no one would see the point of my doing so because here everyone understands where it all comes from. This little group of dissatisfied people, reactionaries, war-worshippers, is no longer Germany, in spite of the noise which they delight to make. Germany to-day stands for work, reconstruction, sympathetic understanding, diligence, and peace.

When I see what the petty Press and Diehard societies make of me I could sometimes fancy myself a monster. My age, for instance, varies between twenty-two and fifty-five years, and I can hardly keep count of the different names I am supposed to bear, or to how many different regiments, brigades, or divisions I am supposed to have, or *not* to have, belonged. I am said, in the same breath, to have stolen my manuscript from a dead comrade, to have cribbed from other war-books and to have written it as a commission from the *Entente*. The latest information about me changes from day to day. All I can say in reply is, that I wish these people were right at any rate about one point: that I never had been a soldier. Then, indeed, I could be sure to-day that I am a really good writer, of which I have still to convince myself. Besides, in my opinion, an author should have said the last word about his book when he wrote the last word of it. If it is good, it can hold its own

against hostile criticism; if bad, all subsequent justification is useless.

Injured vanity and injured self-esteem would be the main motive for replying to personal attacks. *Amour propre*, however, is only permissible after one has turned seventy and completed one's life-work. But I am young and only at the beginning of it. I should be ridiculous in my own eyes were I to take for granted, on the strength of a single book, that I am a good writer. I must first take the measure of my abilities; and to that end I must work. Work—not talk and quarrel. I am the less inclined to talk since all the nonsense which has been gossiped about me was inaccurate and false, and moreover so clearly malevolent and crazy that in Germany every one shrugs his shoulders at it.

Not all soldiers, however, have taken his book in that spirit. The publishers sent an advance copy to General Sir Ian Hamilton, and his letter, forwarded to the author, drew from him that criticism of his own work which we now publish. During all the hubbly-bubbly over his book, Herr Remarque has hitherto remained silent. This is the first time he has explained what it is he really cares about in his own work. We print the complete correspondence because it is interesting that a distinguished English soldier should, by his comments, have divined so nearly the author's main intention that they have persuaded him to break that silence.

I

My Dear Huntington,

April 2nd, 1929.

Thank you for the advance copy of *All Quiet on the Western Front*: I am glad you have found so capable a

translator, clever enough to pick up Remarque's bomb and fling it across the Channel. We here just needed this bit of wakening up.

The tale is that of a generation who have been destroyed by the war: we who fought 'are forlorn like children, and experienced like old men, we are crude and sorrowful and superficial—I believe we are lost'; or, more tersely, 'the war has ruined us for everything'.

This is the keynote of the diary—in which form the revelations are cast: it is struck firmly in the opening half-dozen lines and recurs again and again, until, at the end, the last chord dies softly away into the unknown.

There was a time when I would have strenuously combated Remarque's inferences and conclusions. Now, sorrowfully, I must admit, there is a great deal of truth in them. Latrines, rats, lice; smells, blood, corpses; scenes of sheer horror as where comrades surround the deathbed of a young *Kamerad* with one eye on his agonies, the other on his new English boots; the uninspired strategy; the feeling that the leaders are unsympathetic or stupid; the shrivelling up of thought and enthusiasm under ever-growing machinery of an attrition war; all this lasting too long—so long indeed that half a million souls, still existing in our own island, have been, in Remarque's own terrible word, 'lost'. Why else, may I ask, should those who were once the flower of our youth form to-day so disproportionate a number of the down and out?

All the same, this German goes too far. As there is more in Easter than hot-cross-buns, so there is more in Patriotism than 'beans and bacon'. Even in the last and most accursed of all wars—the war 'on the Western

Front'—was there not the superb leading of forlorn hopes; the vague triumphs, vague but real, of dying for a cause? Was there not also that very patriotism which Remarque treats much as he treated the goose his hero murdered in the officers' mess? Above all, is there not the victory of those, and they were many, who survived everything; profited even by Passchendaele; and afterwards still found courage enough to turn themselves to making the world a better place for themselves and everyone else, including their ex-enemies?

Remarque seems to me a writer who could do anything. He says some incredibly coarse things, but he lets slip sometimes, as if by accident, astonishingly true things hitherto unsaid. As, for instance, his answer to those who with their clumsy questions grope and rummage about his heart, seeking for his innermost feelings upon the happenings of the Western Front: 'a man cannot talk of such things; I would do it willingly, but it is too dangerous for me to put these things into words. I am afraid they might then become gigantic, and I be no longer able to marshal them'.

Im Westen Nichts Neues is a masterpiece of realism, but not a perfect war book; for war, as well as life, holds something more than realism.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) Ian Hamilton.

II¹

Dear Sir Ian Hamilton,

June 1st, 1929

An extract from your letter to Mr. Huntington concerning my book, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, was very

¹ Translated by A. W. Wheen.

kindly sent on to me by the publishers, Messrs. Putnam. I intended to write to you about it at once, but was prevented from so doing during long weeks of illness which denied me the quiet hour I needed for my reply.

I cannot even now tell you which feeling was uppermost in me on receipt of your letter—whether that of personal pleasure, or of amazement and admiration at having been so clearly, so completely, so justly understood. Probably both were equally strong. You will be able to appreciate that I was entirely unaware what effect my work might produce outside Germany—whether I should have succeeded in making myself intelligible to all, or not.

A book on the war is readily exposed to criticism of a political character, but my work should not be so judged, for it was not political, neither pacifist nor militarist, in intention, but human simply. It presents the war as seen within the small compass of the front-line soldier, pieced together out of many separate situations, out of minutes and hours, out of struggle, fear, dirt, bravery, dire necessity, death and comradeship, into one whole mosaic, from which the word Patriotism is only *seemingly* absent, because the simple soldier never spoke of it. His patriotism lay in the *deed* (not in the *word*); it consisted simply in the fact of his presence at the front. For him that was enough. He cursed and swore at the war; but he fought on, and fought on even when already without hope. And of this there is, I believe, for those who can read, enough in my book.

But you, Sir Ian, have in a few words, exposed the very heart of my book, namely, the intention of presenting the fate of a generation of young men, who at the critical age, when they were just beginning to feel

the pulse of life, were set face to face with death. I thank you for that most sincerely, and am delighted to hear these words from a man of high military rank. Your words are prized by me as those of a voice speaking clearly from England. In Germany it has never been forgotten how *fair* the English were, even in the midst of the battle, and so I am particularly pleased to find it confirmed in letters from English soldiers and English officers, that the background, the little things, but things so important for the individual soldier, were apparently similar on all the fronts.

I have not felt myself called upon to argue about the war. That must be reserved for the leaders, who alone know all that it is necessary to know. I merely wanted to awaken understanding for a generation that more than all others has found it difficult to make its way back from the four years of death, struggle and terror, to the peaceful fields of work and progress. Thousands upon thousands have even yet been unable to do it; countless letters from all countries have proved it to me. But all these letters say the same thing: 'We have been unable, because we did not know that our lethargy, our cynicism, our unrest, our hopelessness, our silence, our feeling of secession and exclusion arose from the fact that the regenerative power of our youth had been dissipated in the war. But now we will find the way, for you in your book have shown us the danger in which we stand, the danger of being destroyed by ourselves. But the recognition of a danger is the first step towards escape from it. We will now find our way back, for you have told us what it was that threatened us, and thereby it has become harmless.'

You see, Sir Ian, it is in this vein that my comrades

write to me, and that proves that my book is only *seemingly* pessimistic. In reality, as it shows how much has been destroyed, it should serve as a call to them to rally for the peaceful battle of work and of life itself, the effort to achieve personality and culture. For the very reason that we had so early to learn to know death, we now want to shake off its paralysing spell—for we have seen it eye to eye and undisguised—we want to begin once again to believe in life. This will be the aim of my future work. He who has pointed out the danger, must also point out the road onward.

I have as yet never spoken my mind so fully; but your charming, appreciative letter compelled me to take up the pen in order to emphasize the two things in my book which, though not there in any very explicit way, are nevertheless there implicit—I mean, in the first place, the quiet heroism of the simple soldier, which lay precisely in the fact that he did not speak of it, that he did not perhaps so much as once realize it himself—speaking only of ‘beans and bacon,’ while all the time so much more lay behind that was other than this; and secondly, the fact that my book does not desire to preach resignation but rather to be an S.O.S.call.

You are right, Sir Ian, my book is not a ‘perfect war book’. But such a war book, in the comprehensive sense, may not be written for yet another ten, perhaps even another hundred years. I restricted myself to the purely human aspect of war experience, the experience through which every man who went up to the front had to make his painful way: the fighting, the terror, the mastery, the power, the tenacity of the vital forces in the individual man faced with death and annihilation.

I like to regard that as the universal, fundamental

experience; and I have aimed at describing without rhetoric and without political exploitation, this fundamental experience alone. And to this, I believe, may be attributed the success of my book, which in Germany has been read not merely in literary circles, but by those also who almost never take a book in their hands —by artisans, labourers, business people, mechanics, postmen, chauffeurs, apprentices, and so on; for many hundreds of letters all say: '*It is my own experience*'. The *outward* experience was, perhaps, in each case merely similar (though, as far as possible, I described only typical, standard situations, such as constantly re-occurred), but the decisive factor undoubtedly was that the book represented a part of the *inner* experience—Life confronting and fighting Death.

In conclusion, Sir Ian, allow me to thank you once again for your letter, and you may judge from the length of this how highly I valued it. I am happy to have met with such appreciative understanding.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) Erich Maria Remarque.

III

June 19th, 1929

Dear Mr. Remarque,

Yours of June 1st has given me much pleasure. I can well imagine the postman pouring out the best part of his heavy bag whilst you look at the pile of letters in despair, saying to yourself: 'So, because I have written well I must go on writing for ever!' All the more then am I grateful to you for having found time to write so fully and indeed so important an epistle to an ex-enemy commander.

I fear I have been a long time in answering, and one reason is that I have so much work on my hands as President of the British Legion in London and in trying to help old soldiers who fought under me in the war. You see, in England we have over one million unemployed. More than half of these are old soldiers. When they went to the war they were the flower, not the dregs, of our people. Always I have tried to rouse them and stir them up by explaining to them the reason; namely, that education is most valuable from the age of eighteen to twenty-two and that, just during those very years, when the stay-at-homes were mastering their trades, they were standing in mud under a rain of shells. Therefore, when they came back they were at a disadvantage. Therefore, when trade was slack they were the first to be discharged. But all this lost ground, I have been careful to add, could be, by courage and perseverance, recovered. First of all the Legionaries must bind themselves into a body professing, as such, no politics, so that they must carry weight with any Government. Secondly, they must work to save their old comrades and the widows and orphans of their late comrades. Thirdly, they must strive for some high ideal, the highest being peace: for this, as ex-service men they could do with far better grace than professed pacifists: especially they could work wonders for the cause of peace by holding out the hand of friendship to ex-enemy associations of soldiers. For all the people of the world would then say to one another: 'Surely, if these soldiers who threw bombs at one another can shake hands, we, who never struck or were stricken in our own persons can also afford to be friends!'

These things I tell you not (I hope) from conceit, but

because you should thus understand better how your work has appealed to me. For you have explained to your war heroes (no longer *die Gemeine*) that the war not only robbed them of their education, but actually burnt up in its fiery furnace the energy and regenerative power which was intended by God to see them through the early struggles of their careers as citizens.

But when we come to practice, how difficult! Easier it will be to put a hook into the nose of leviathan than to draw the Stahlhelms and the Reichsbanner into one non-political Legion for the battle against war.

Five years ago, I was almost voted out of the Presidency of the Legion in London because I wanted them to shake hands with the Germans, and because I pointed out that they would thus show the way to the timorous, manœuvring politicians and *Beamten* at Geneva, who depend for their livelihood upon the absence of the peace they are paid heavy sums to secure.

Yet still the pen is mightier than the sword. So write another book, my dear Mr. Remarque. As one who has served in eight campaigns, I say, take up thy pen and write. For you possess the gift of genius and you may not wrap it up in a napkin. That magical scene where you sit in your old room and pray in vain to your old gods, the books. That unforgettable moment when you breathe in again the acid smell of the cold water of the Mill—*In einem kühlen Grunde!* Yes; you have the touch; the sure touch, and you can do it as no other can. But you will need all the power of your persuasive pen. For great and terrible is the counter-power of the romance and beauty of war, to which you wisely make no reference in your book. But there it is—entrenched

somewhere—latent in your soul. Have you seen a German army corps, colours flying, march past, the earth shaking to the tramp of the parade step? Lord Roberts told me in his old age, that the most superb picture he preserved in his mind's eye was that of two Highland battalions, in their kilts and feather bonnets, advancing in perfect line against the walled city of Lucknow, the round shot hopping and skipping over the plain, sometimes over them, sometimes into them, yet all keeping step as on an inspection parade. These are the legends and illusions you have got to transfix very quickly with your pen.

For the boys of to-day are just the same as you were twenty years ago, and as I was sixty years ago.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Ian Hamilton.

W. K. FLEMING

GENERAL LEE

'I broke my heart over the surrender of Lee.' So wrote Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone. And the sudden and uncontrolled emotion of the sentence says a good deal more for General Lee's memory than pages of involved argument over the respective shares borne by Slavery and States' Rights in the Secession of 1861. Acton's foible might be infallibility, and the passage of time has modified some of his pontifical criticisms of literature and life; but he remains, in his silences as well as in his words, a tremendous practitioner at the bar of history. None can question his encyclopædic knowledge, his refusal to allow that knowledge to be coloured in any way—'the historian must not serve a cause'—his imperturbable moral judgment, and, above all, that dream of his life which remained a dream, and one of the world's big unwritten books, 'The History of Liberty'. No differences of time, circumstances, customs, ever deflected Acton's standards of right and of freedom. His was a heart not easily touched, let alone broken; and for whatever bore the taint of human perversity or the shadow of tyranny, 'I make,' he said, 'no allowances'. Before this informed and inflexible intelligence Robert Lee, for four tragic years, played the part of champion, not merely of a losing cause, but of a cause which many good men said deserved to be lost, and the result was a complete and rarely-phrased acquittal.

The world of soldiers, applying its own strictly technical tests, has long ago assigned to General Lee a place in its

very front rank. More than sixty years have passed since the little court-house of Appomattox saw Grant rise to unwonted chivalry as he accorded terms to the greatness of Lee, a greatness that no disaster to his starving and shattered host could tarnish. Lee had fought a great fight, and his military course was ended. But the years have pleaded more and more eloquently for what he achieved. An ageing man, 'too old for field-service', as Grant said, and often actually ill, though his splendid presence belied his growing infirmity, always outnumbered, always short of commissariat and effective artillery supplies, his nine campaigns against adversaries, three of whom at least, McClellan, Meade and Grant, were capable men and more than capably equipped, have become a world-wide wonder. There are problems, to be sure, and one or two may well be discussed, but very nearly all of them, on patient examination, redound to his credit on one count or another. We may say that, of set purpose, he confined himself to a limited field of activity. Even as a soldier, his campaigns ranged over not more than 150 miles of terrain; and he had the unique advantage of an accurate knowledge of the characters and capacities of his opponents, derived from old days together at West Point. In one sense, therefore, he was neither a Marlborough, a Wellington, nor a Napoleon. But, after all, these qualifications of his genius may be viewed in a different light. Like Marlborough and Napoleon, and unlike Wellington, he gained and kept the supreme loyalty of his troops, until that loyalty reached an adoring devotion unsurpassed in military annals. His self-limitation, for he would never mix with politics, meant that his soul was unflecked by the ambition and unstained by the meanness that marred both Napoleon

and Marlborough. The ground over which he fought and re-fought—practically somewhat south of Richmond to somewhat north of Washington—teemed with difficulties, unprovided as it was with good roads, and bisected by maze-like swamps, tangled forest-land and broad rivers, conditions not unnoticed by Sheridan when he accompanied the German Staff in the war of 1870, and remarked on the merits of the paved chaussées. And, finally, it is one thing to be aware of the characteristics of one's opponents; quite another to take advantage of them. In this peculiar gift, Lee has had no rivals. 'He read McClellan like an open book'; he had one method with Pope, another with Burnside, a third with Hooker, and most indubitably a fourth with Meade and Grant. With utterly inferior means, both in numbers and *matériel*, he proved himself more than a match for all of them. And the inferiority of means must really be held accountable for the strange blemish which haunted all his triumphs, and at once strikes the eye of the most casual student of the Civil War—Lee's invariable failure to follow up his successes. Even his Southern admirers cavilled at this at the time, and compared his quiescence after some hard-won and Pyrrhic victory with Napoleon's instant and remorseless pressure of a demoralized foe. But things are better understood now. Even in the heat of the war, those who were nearest to him, and naturally sharp critics at that, judged him correctly. Jackson absolved him emphatically from over-caution; General Ives told Alexander that 'the very name for Lee might be Audacity'; Longstreet, much irritated by criticism of his own doings at Gettysburg, accused him of being unduly combative in attack, though 'absolutely perfect when on the defensive'. We may add one other

fact; neither of the two great combatants, the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac, was ever 'demoralized'. The valour and power of the 'thinking bayonets' were evenly matched. The difference lay elsewhere. The Army of Northern Virginia, while it lacked most necessities, including food, clothing and boots, marched and fought, ragged and barefoot, under an inspired commander; the Army of the Potomac, faithful indeed to the magnetic but enigmatic McClellan, found itself, after his dismissal, for ever looking nervously over its shoulder till it felt behind it the bulldog tenacity of Grant.

The main features of the Secession controversy are still intricate and undecided. The rights and the wrongs of it will, perhaps, never be fully settled by the conscience of America or of the world at large, though no American, burdened as he still is by the heavy issues it raised, would wish nowadays to go back on the arbitrament of the war. The contest, in fact, was under one aspect a contest of two eras and two civilizations. One of those two civilizations, with all its dignity and charm, perished at Appomattox in the person of its representative, Lee. Even the outward appearance of the vanquished and the victor was emblematic. To the old-world courtesy of Lee it would have seemed impossible to attend such a conference, involving the dissolution, 'because it is right', of the Army he had led, otherwise than in full general's uniform. Grant, on the other hand, nowise of course to his discredit, hurried to the interview straight from the trenches in a private's unbuttoned fatigue-jacket. It would have been well had the symbolism stopped there. But, while the old ideals and the old integrity, a priceless legacy for the South of the future, remained with Lee,

that unbuttoned laxity of Grant reappeared, in many a form of disastrous financial corruption, during his two presidencies. For it was not so much the North as the West of 'the frontier' that conquered the South.

All the same, the North gave out the tune of the war, and the air has not rung true. John Brown bequeathed an excellent marching-song to Sherman and his unspeakable 'bummers', as they fared ravaging and marauding through defenceless Georgia and the Savannahs. There is no doubt that his 'body lies a-mouldering in the grave', but whether 'his soul goes marching on' is quite another question. For John Brown was a thorough-paced old ruffian, as the records of Kansas can testify, and his Raid—its object the horrors of a servile insurrection—drew, not from any Southern partisans, but from Lincoln himself, who compared him to Orsini, all the direct and scathing condemnation that is needed. But it may be noted in passing that Brown, and Sherman, who took care to turn his 'War is Hell' into fact, and Sheridan, with his devastation of the Shenandoah Valley, left repercussions of their exploits which woke, and woke with a vengeance, in the German invasion of France and Belgium in 1914. Sheridan, indeed, had supplied the necessary hint to Bismarck: 'Leave your enemies only their eyes to weep with'.

The North set the air, and the air has failed to ring true. The negroes of the Abolitionist fancy have never risen to the standard of the 'Uncle Tom' of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's world-famed book, a book epoch-making indeed—only the epoch it made was one of infamy and tears. Yet her story resembled that other woman's missile flung in the Argive town, which ended the dazzling career of the Epirot conqueror. For *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was taken,

not as lavish propaganda, but as gospel truth throughout Lancashire, and the Southern belief and boast, 'Cotton is King', with all that it implied, wealth and supplies and recognition for the seceding States, vanished into thin air when the crisis came. Lancashire tightened its belt and folded its arms; it would not help the slave-driver; and so the Blockade was unbroken, and not even Gladstone's eulogy of Jefferson Davis, and Napoleon III's anxiety to make profit for his Mexican adventure, sufficed to move Lancashire.

This was greatly to the credit of the suffering cotton industry in England; only, as it happened, negro slavery, bulking large as the occasion of Secession, was not its true cause. The cause, as Lowell pointed out, was the Census of 1860. The South suddenly woke to the fact that it was to be permanently outvoted in the election for the presidency. It knew nothing, save by the most grotesque rumour, of the new President's aims and antecedents. Would that it had known more, and that Lincoln and Lee, whose residence of Arlington was within sight of the White House, could have met, and discovered that their sane and fair outlooks were by no means dissimilar! For Lee had long ago declared slavery to be a moral and economic evil, adding, with much penetration, that it was the slave-owner, rather than the slave, who suffered by the South's 'peculiar institution'. Along with other prominent statesmen and soldiers of the South, he had manumitted his own slaves. Those who lay stress upon Alexander Stephens's unfortunate 'corner-stone' speech, or outlying resolutions such as that of the Mississippi Convention, would do well to ponder Jefferson Davis's 'Inaugural', which contained no mention of slavery, and Lincoln's own letter to the *New York Tribune*, in which he

said that he was out simply for the Union. 'If I could save that without freeing any slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some, and leaving others alone, I would also do that.' Another utterance of his, that 'this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free', does not really conflict with the letter. If left to itself, and under proper guarantees of compensation for the loss of millions of wealth (and Lincoln afterwards proved that he would have seen to that), the South would slowly, but very surely, have freed its slaves.

The trouble was that the South could not reckon on a succession of Lincolns, and that it would not stand coercion. There was good tradition, Northern as well as Southern, for the doctrine of States' Rights, as against Federal domination. When the Constitution of 1787 was adopted, at least four of the States—Virginia, Massachusetts, New York, and South Carolina—expressly reserved the right to withdraw from the Union under provocation. In the Treaty of Paris, George III and his Parliament had declared each of the thirteen Colonies to be 'free, sovereign and independent'. The Abolitionists of the North, making more haste and less speed, came in the way of a settlement by consent; and Jefferson Davis, losing his head, fired on 'that piece of dry goods', as Artemus Ward euphoniously named the Stars and Stripes, floating over Fort Sumter. But the saner North, as a whole, headed by Horace Greeley, still held its hand, and it was reserved, by an irony of history, for the two wisest and humanest men in all America to precipitate the conflict. And those two men were Abraham Lincoln and Robert Lee.

Lincoln determined, as Greeley put it, 'to pin the South to the North by bayonets', and called to the colours 75,000 men, with the express object of subduing the South, and primarily, of course, 'the Old Dominion', Virginia, lying on the other side of the Potomac. Lee, as the foremost officer on active service in the Union Army, was offered by Scott, the aged commander-in-chief, the duty of heading the invasion. He had come to the first of three heart-breaking decisions of his life—the others were the refusal of dictatorship in the South in 1865, and the Surrender of Appomattox. After days and nights of agony and prayer, he resolved that he could not carry fire and sword into his own State, and resigned his commission, his home, his wealth, and all that life had hitherto held dear to him, to serve as a private, if need be, in the Virginian forces. It is something that a former opponent of Lee's, Mr. Charles Adams, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society, has publicly stated that 'if in all respects similarly circumstanced, I hope I should have been filial and unselfish enough to have done as Lee did'. The world has endorsed that verdict, nowhere more emphatically than in Mr. Bradford's brilliant analysis of *Lee, the American*; and Mr. Bradford came to his task not a little worried by the iteration of 'Lee's perfections'. And yet—we cannot help wishing that Lee's unfaltering self-abnegation had, just here, failed to assert itself so definitely. For his influence in his State was so profound, his connections with its leading families so close and reaching so far back (his wife's lineage traced from Washington himself), that the word he could have put in with the Richmond authorities against a resort to arms, and, true to his principles of subordination, would not utter, might have proved decisive. As it was, he did not



move, save to give up his all. As it was, Lincoln did move; and it is still a moot point whether Lincoln's goading of the North to action, involving the sacrifice of a million lives, and the ruin of hearts and homes innumerable, does not lie as the heaviest of responsibilities on his memory.

Anyhow, and the fierce humour of Thaddeus Stevens probably derived a grim satisfaction from the fact, it was to escape servitude and not to enforce it, that Virginia passed the Secession Ordinance. Other States quickly followed suit. Lord Charnwood's astonishing contention, which he frankly confesses English people have always found incredible, that 'this imposing movement, in which rich and poor, gentle and simple, astute men of state and pious clergymen, went hand in hand to the verge of ruin and beyond was undertaken simply and solely in behalf of slavery', will bear investigation no whit better than Professor Rhodes's argument that it was a movement to extend slavery. When a great people splits away from its neighbours, and that defensively, it can hardly hope to extend its institutions among its former friends. And if the paramount issue of States' Rights were again to arise on the American continent, most Americans still admit that they would go with their particular State. Yet this very fact raises another question often asked about Lee. It was first suggested by Grant himself. Was Lee more a Virginian than he was a Confederate? Formby goes so far as to assert that this supposed Virginian parochialism 'was the one weak point in a very great character'. We will consider this forthwith.

Lee limited himself severely in this direction and that. It was a part of his interior discipline. But, candidly, this particular limitation seems to be inferred from very

slight premisses. He fought mainly on Virginian soil; yes, but in the Carolinas and West Virginia as well, and two of his chief campaigns took place in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Moreover, it was the resolve of the Confederate Government to keep him between themselves and the Army of the Potomac, till, to quote his own saying, he 'got a crick in the neck from looking over his shoulder towards Richmond'. He lost his army at last for the sake of Richmond, but this hardly argues any lukewarmness to the Confederate authorities. Then there is the incident, which certainly caused friction at the time, of his appointment to the command of army corps after Jackson's death in 1863. Two Virginians, Ewell and A. P. Hill, were promoted over the heads of two Georgians, McLaws and D. H. Hill, who 'ranked' them. But A. P. Hill had been marked for high command months earlier; Ewell was a more popular man than D. H. Hill, and an equally good soldier, and Lee already had a Georgian at his side in the person of Longstreet. And there happened to be two excellent witnesses to the loyalty of Lee to the Southern cause as a whole—Davis, nervously alert to the possibility of disaffection, and Lee himself. Davis could say: 'They do injustice to Lee who believe he fought only for Virginia. He was ready to go anywhere for the good of his country.' Lee declared that the Union was dear to him, but if it came to be a choice between the Union and his personal honour, then there could be but one decision. So the decision was made, and, said he, 'the Confederate States have but one object in view, the successful issue of their war of independence. Everything should yield to its accomplishment'. He would be a bold man who, hearing those words, and knowing anything of Lee, could afterwards profess even

a doubt as to his perfect loyalty to the South. An occasional sharp despatch to the Richmond Cabinet, which if not, in Jones's bitter phrase, a collection of 'idiotic insects', was, with the exception of Davis and Benjamin, a gathering of mediocrities, in no way interferes with that loyalty. One wishes that there were more of such despatches, and that the patience and dignity of Lee were not so nearly invulnerable.

To deal with Lee's actual campaigns is, in the space of an article, an impossible task, and, for a civilian, an impertinent one. The great critic, Ropes, is of course right in saying that Lee in his most brilliant coups ran risks unjustifiable by any laws of strategy; this was the case with the successful flank attacks of Second Manassas and Chancellorsville. But Moltke once averred that the junction of two armies on the field of battle is the highest proof of military genius, and, as Henderson notes, judged by this test, Lee stands out as one of the greatest of soldiers. He accomplished the feat four times. And if his strategy was hazardous, the justification which Lee himself pleaded to obvious criticisms is surely sound. He was over-matched in numbers, artillery, in all that goes to make up an army, and he had to take the boldest risks, if he were to achieve anything. His latest trench-warfare has never been surpassed, though sixty years elapsed before its claims to military attention were recognized. The French *École de Guerre*, so General Maurice tells us, now includes the study of Lee's campaigns in its curriculum.

But one problem in his military career cannot possibly be passed over in silence. It is really not true, as Professor Pollard suggests, that Gettysburg is remembered more for the words that Lincoln afterwards uttered there than for the deeds done on the battlefield itself. In reality,

Lincoln's speech is beginning to wear a trifle thin. We know too much about 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'. But what precisely happened at Gettysburg is still the subject of as keen discussion as the battle of Waterloo. The very contours of the field, Seminary Ridge, Cemetery Ridge, the Round Tops, Culps Hill, are as familiar as Hougomont and La Haye Sainte. But 'why Lee lost the three days' battle by arguing with his chief lieutenant instead of fighting', why Longstreet delayed and delayed through the crucial hours when, to use his own phrase, 'time was more than cannon-balls', and when the fate of the Confederacy hung in the balance—these are matters over which men continue to differ. Something on them must be said, and something perhaps may be urged on behalf of Lee's reputation, which never sank so curiously low as in this campaign and on this field.

Let us be frank, for one thing is certain. Throughout the crisis, Lee was not himself. He had never recovered, and was not destined to recover, from an illness contracted the year before. It must be remembered that it was a man in his fifty-seventh year who was campaigning, and that it was his second campaign of the year, the first being the marvellous feat of Chancellorsville, 'the Leuthen of the nineteenth century', as Henderson calls it. In his despatch to Davis, after the Gettysburg failure, Lee specifically states that his sight was bad, and that he had to rely upon the eyes of others; and complaints from Lee were not mere excuses. The Prussian officer, Scheibert, also writes that, whereas at Chancellorsville Lee was so absolutely calm and self-possessed that during one of the most critical periods of the battle he began to converse on the subject of education, at Gettysburg he was notably

uneasy and depressed. And Longstreet, to whom, if to any one, the uneasiness was due, talks alternately of excitement and of nervousness. A strange fact, brought to the notice of the present writer by a student of the war, is that for long periods during the three days' battle, we can gather from none of the many accounts where precisely Lee was. His line, six miles long, was badly over-extended, and we know that he rode from end to end more than once, no slight strain in the broiling July weather, but there are gaps of hours during which Lee was seemingly invisible. Another curious circumstance, which may very well hinge on the foregoing, is that, while the Army of the Potomac had never been more smartly handled, the High Command in the Army of Northern Virginia suffered from a kind of collective inertia. Ewell, on Lee's extreme left, failed to press his advantage on the first evening, when he might have had Cemetery Ridge, the Federal key-position, for the asking. Rodes would not move his Division; A. P. Hill handled his Corps throughout with unexampled feebleness. And Longstreet—by common consent it all comes back to Longstreet. In command of Lee's right wing, and ordered verbally to assault at daybreak on the second morning, when he would have found but slight resistance, and the Round Tops unoccupied, he loitered, waiting for one brigade alone, till late in the afternoon. 'I hate to go into battle with one boot off', was his reason. Possessed of his 'one boot', and ordered, after a heavy battle (for, although slow, he was a superb fighter when once in action), to attack at dawn on the third day, he delayed once more till the afternoon, by which time the Northern Army was fully up, and Pickett's 15,000 men were sent over a mile of ground swept by artillery to their magnificent but

hopeless charge on an impregnable position. Of course, Longstreet was acting reluctantly all along, in opposition to his own idea of manœuvring Meade out of position by turning his left; of course, he was finally right in his contention that 'the 15,000 men had never been arrayed' who could storm Meade's centre; and of course Lee had condoned his subordinate's obstinacy by arguing with him. All the same, it is a subordinate's part to try his utmost to carry out his superior's orders, instead of proving himself the better prophet. And Longstreet chose the latter rôle.

But there is a great deal to be said for Ropes's opinion that Gettysburg was, after all, only the culmination of a process begun long before. The Army of Northern Virginia and its great leader, misled by a series of amazing triumphs over the Army of the Potomac, a brave and seasoned force, hitherto badly handled, had fallen into the fatal trap of undervaluing its opponent. This accounts for a good deal of the mismanaged campaign in Pennsylvania. Lee's use of cavalry was never his strong point, and he had just lost Jackson, 'the greatest executive officer the sun ever shone on'. But Chancellorsville should have taught him, even without that incessant study of Napoleon's campaigns to which Jackson was addicted, that cavalry are 'the eyes of an army'. Stuart, however, had been sent off with his regiments, partly to scare Washington, partly to feel for the Susquehanna Bridge, and, without information as to his foe, Lee's army stumbled blindly forward, marching and counter-marching, till the prosaic need of boots threw his advance on Gettysburg, a centre of the trade, and right upon Meade's tracks. But those tracks were widely spun out, and an immediate concentration and attack would have

caught the Army of the Potomac in detail, and defeated it. Ewell, however, started the game of hesitation, and Longstreet kept it up till the battle was lost. And here it seems that Ropes might well have carried his argument a step farther. Another process had been allowed to begin long before, which reached its fatal climax here. No one can read the story of Longstreet's part in the war without noticing something very strange in it. Lee always kept at his side, and not only through affection for his 'old war-horse'. Nor yet to hurry his pace; though Longstreet was a slow marcher. The truth was that the South was a Confederacy, and did not fight on Federal lines. Now Longstreet was not a Virginian; he was born in Carolina, and brought up in Georgia. Lee simply could not issue orders to him, as he would to a Virginian. He had to play the part of a Marlborough, to reason and to persuade. Sectional jealousy was already abroad, and, even if the Confederacy had won the war, would probably have ruined its victory. Nothing but Lee's superb poise and tact enabled him to work with the gifted but touchy Davis, and to keep Jackson and Longstreet in line. Now Jackson had gone, and the reader of Longstreet's *From Manassas to Appomattox* can easily divine the position which its author conceived himself to hold. Lee was not likely to have forgotten his lieutenant's deliberate refusal to obey the thrice-issued order to advance at Second Manassas, and his eventual taking of the great counter-stroke on his own initiative. This had been followed by disagreement as to the conception for the Maryland campaign, and the half-grumbling stipulation, in which Lee had never concurred, for the defensive-offensive in Pennsylvania. At Gettysburg, in consequence, things came to a deadlock which all Lee's persuasiveness proved

unable to cope with. Lee's own strategy had been far from faultless, and at Gettysburg he fought on a radically bad tactical formation, a concave line trying with inferior numbers to envelop the almost hourly increasing force of a well-equipped enemy; but he had never before attacked in so disjointed a fashion. His plan had more than a chance of success at the outset; at the end, despite the surpassing skill of the retreat, when all his genius re-awoke, it had to be reckoned a disaster. For the losses were enormous, about a third of each army; but Meade could replace his, while Lee could not. And for the disaster and losses alike, Longstreet, the gallant fighter of other fields—the Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chickamauga, the Wilderness—and behind Longstreet, the military exigencies of a Confederacy, must be held responsible.

It was not Lee's way, however, to seek a scapegoat. 'It is I who have lost this battle, and you must help me out of it', was only one of many generous and reassuring comments of his as he rode up, and, with all his wonted serenity, rallied the wrecks of Pickett's charge, and steadied the rest of his army for the infinitely dangerous retreat to the Potomac. A chance exclamation to Imboden, as he dismounted at dead of night, near that general's command, revealed his exhaustion and the agony of his mind; and the complete change of his strategy to the defensive after Gettysburg shows that the real meaning of the reverse was plain enough to his clear intelligence. Henceforth the Confederacy must play, and play to the end, a losing game. It was none the less brilliant for that; indeed, Sir Frederick Maurice thinks that Lee's military ability never shone so transcendently as when he stalemated Grant, a most dangerous opponent, in the

Wilderness, at Spottsylvania, and on the North Anna, and finally hurled him back at Coldharbor. It was certainly during these days and in the trenches round Petersburg that the figure of the Southern leader took on those heroic contours which have ever since marked him out as supreme amongst men of great character in the world's history.

These closing months of the war saw also the second of Lee's momentous decisions, all three of which were renunciations as well. Nothing succeeds like success, and the South had grown weary of its capable but biassed President. From all quarters, Congress, the Press, the general public, even his immediate entourage, hints poured in upon Lee that he should save the Confederacy by seizing the dictatorship. Behind him was the unquestioning devotion of 'that incomparable infantry which for four years carried the rebellion on its bayonets', and the soldiery only spoke the mind of the people at large. All jealousies were hushed in Lee's presence, the selfless man whom everybody trusted. And yet Lee refused; he well-nigh refused to open his mouth even in criticism. It may have been that the South was past saving; Lee at least always believed that only foreign intervention could save it, and the hour for that had long passed. But that was not his reason for refusal. To his thinking, every man had his proper sphere, and Robert Lee's sphere of action was not politics. His sense of honour, too, stood in the way. He was the sworn servant of the Confederacy; he would not play the part of a Caesar, a Cromwell, or a Napoleon, and soil his soul. Lastly, Jefferson Davis was his friend, a fact, by the way, infinitely to the credit of Davis, and he would not betray his friend. All the reasons were noble and good, and yet,

in view of the black era of so-called Reconstruction, one may perhaps be allowed a sigh. But Lee could not foresee Reconstruction; he could but weigh the present issues of right and wrong. So, while his thin line of troops was 'stretched until it broke, as I told them it would', he remained, silent and resolute, on guard over Richmond. The line at last was snapped at Five Forks, and the final desperate rush westwards began, to escape Grant's enveloping cordon of troops, and to join Joseph Johnston. It continued for a hundred miles till Lee was headed off, a supply train failing him, by Sheridan and Ord at Appomattox, and the marvel was that the march went so far, and so nearly succeeded. It was, in fact, a magnificent feat of arms, carried out by troops nearly bereft of heavy ammunition, and totally destitute of any food save what the roots and grasses of the fields supplied. For Professor Rhodes to declare that Lee was out-generalled by Grant under conditions for the two armies 'not unequal', almost breeds despair for the fair writing of history. At all events, Lee found his way blocked, and himself face to face with his last and fiercest ordeal of soul. It was open for his forces to disperse, and to initiate an indefinite guerrilla warfare. There were not wanting those around Lee who urged such a course. 'What will the world say, General, of the surrender of an army in the field?' Lee made his decision, and the world, at any rate the American world, hardly to this day realizes what it owes to that decision. 'I know, Colonel, they will not understand our condition, and they will say hard things of us. But that is not the question. The question is: 'What is right? If it is right to surrender this army, I will take all the responsibility.' So, although he 'would rather face a thousand deaths', he went to Grant, and with steadfast

dignity sheathed his sword, spoke a few words of simple farewell to his men, and rode for ever out of the profession of arms he had adorned so well.

But he did not ride out of history, even then. Five years of quiet service, as splendid in their inspiration to posterity as his great war record, remained to him. His was an extraordinary position. The object of execration to half his nation, of adoration to the other half, known to Europe, despite Moltke's gibe about 'armed mobs', as the most famous soldier of his age, his mind and character never lost their perfect poise. He had led the South to battle; now he looked about for opportunity to train its young men in the arts of peace. To proposals of emolument and ease he turned a deaf ear. A nobleman in England offered him a country seat and an annuity of £3,000 a year; Lee replied that his duty lay among his fellow-countrymen. A financial trust in the North urged him to accept the position of chairman of its board, at a huge rate of salary. Lee replied that he had no experience of the business, and must decline. He was told that it was only his name that was wanted; the answer came: 'My name is not for sale'. It was a proscribed and ruined man who turned down these proposals. At last, when he was with difficulty persuaded that his acceptance would do no harm to the institution, he consented to become President of the impoverished and half-empty Washington College, since honourably known as the Washington and Lee University. The numbers filled up again as by magic; new faculties were formed, new buildings erected, and under Lee's guidance the broadest and most modern ideals of education were adopted. Thus tranquilly and beneficently, steadily living down, without fuss and without rancour, all the vituperation and blame to which he

was at first subjected, and counselling others to do the same, the leader of one of the finest armies that the world has ever seen awaited his own last call.

There is neither need nor space to tell again the charming anecdotes of these final years. His care for his students, his love of children, his solicitude for his old veterans, and indeed for those, if need be, who had fought against him—the stories of such traits are, or should be, familiar enough. In Lexington, and its wooded ways, there was no figure so well known and loved as that of the stately and white-haired hero of many a hard-fought field, great in defeat as in victory, as he rode by on his war-horse 'Traveller', exchanging with him, as he was wont to say, 'many a sweet confidence'.

What, we wonder, was the nature of those confidences? The question suggests another, asked in the early days of the war by Mrs. Chesnut in her *Diary from Dixie*: 'Can any one say they know General Lee?' It is certainly difficult to write Lee's life; not one of several attempts has proved satisfactory. Some great sayings of his stand out, that on the hill above Fredericksburg, for instance, as he watched the advance of Burnside's vast army: 'It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it'; or, in a very different hour, 'Human virtue should equal human calamity'—surely one of the finest maxims ever heard from mortal lips! But still we want something that we shall never have. Despite his gracious geniality, and the affection he evoked from all and sundry, from animals and children, from family and friends, there is a strange veil between Lee and even the most ardent of his admirers. It might have arisen from habitual self-control, from an old-world dignity and reticence of manners. But we feel it is more than that. Some element of reserve that

he could never break through screens Lee from his fellow men. He knew it. 'I only am alone', he once wrote. And it has been asked: 'Did he, with all his unstinted gifts of his fortune, his energies, his genius, to his friends and to his cause, every really give himself?' The solemn silence that was felt almost as a living force by the dying soldier's bedside during his last days on earth, comes almost as a significant answer. But, however that answer be interpreted, we can affirm, with reverent certitude, that Lee did give himself thrice, completely and whole-heartedly. For he gave himself to his army, and to his country, and to his God.

F. L. LUCAS

CRITICISM

'Méprise tous ces drôles; à quoi bon s'inquiéter de ce que ces merles piaillent? C'est perdre son temps que de lire des critiques. Je me fais fort de soutenir dans une thèse qu'il n'y en a pas eu une de bonne depuis qu'on en fait, que ça ne sert à rien qu'à embêter les auteurs et à abrutir le public, et enfin qu'on fait de la critique quand on ne peut pas faire de l'Art, de même qu'on se met mouchard quand on ne peut pas être soldat. Je voudrais bien savoir ce que les poètes de tout temps ont eu de commun dans leurs œuvres avec ceux qui en ont fait l'analyse! Plaute aurait ri d'Aristote s'il l'avait connu! Corneille se débattait sous lui! Voltaire, malgré lui, a été rétréci par Boileau!' So much (and a good deal more) Flaubert found to say on the subject of criticism in general; while poor Louise Colet, reading his letter, doubtless drummed with her fingers on the table and wished, for the thousandth time, that her strange lover had a little more love in him and a little less hate. So, for generation after generation, the great writers have raged or laughed at the futility of critics: while the critics—why, they, for their part, remain as unabashed by such outbursts as a swarm of flies by an exasperated wave of the hand. They simply return to the attack and buzz about their victims as affectionately as before. It is surely a very odd situation. The creative writers despise the critics; and the critics, showing (in this respect, at least) a more than Christian meekness, repay this contempt with praises and loving studies of the writers;

once the writers are dead, particularly. They take no trouble to defend themselves. At most they may hint modestly in passing that without them the great writers would infallibly be forgotten in a generation, and the whole world reel back into barbarism; but, as a rule, they do not even stop to consider the justification for their own existence. After all, that is natural; few of God's creatures ever do, however curious: they would be in danger of ceasing to exist, if they did. So that it would perhaps be asking too much to expect that criticism, which has not much in common with charity in other respects, should begin at home, by inquiring how far it is itself really worth while. Still, others may feel misgivings.

No doubt some criticism serves a clear purpose; no doubt some of it is entertaining. But surely any one who is accustomed to ask whether things are worth the amount of life they cost, must feel some dismay at the enormous quantity of time, energy, and even intelligence that our age expends upon it. Besides, may there not be something worse than waste? In this babel of opinions and arguments about literature I feel there is much that is not only sterile, but also sterilizing. Criticism becomes at times a superstition and a drug. The ivy darkens the house.

The present age has no great faith in anything; but it still tries hard to believe in experts. Not even the War, nor histories of the War, can quite cure it of that. And certainly the world grows in complexity so fast that we lie increasingly at their mercy. More and more the expert tends to dominate the intelligent individual; the old ideals of liberty to be replaced by the organization, discipline, and efficiency of the Termite State. The

economists dispose of our worldly goods, the psychoanalysts of our souls. There are, indeed, countries where bodies and souls are nationalized and rationalized already. The process is said to be excellent for the train-services; but for the human beings? And when it comes to the kingdom of literature, this tendency to set up codes and dogmas, dictators and high priests, to turn poetry into something between a church and a laboratory, a religion and a science, seems to me horrible. True, it is nothing in the least new for critics to talk as if they were the Eternal Father or, at very least, the Recording Angel; but there seems to be at the moment a recrudescence of this particular nuisance; and there was never, really, less excuse for such dogmatizations. No doubt the spectacle of a number of very angry gentlemen of letters all laying down the law differently, and excommunicating one another like so many anti-popes, matters little in itself; one can look on, or away. But that a credulous faith in the literary judgements and systems they formulate should distort the taste and enjoyment of a certain number of other people, does matter rather more. There are, I feel, at present too many money-changers in the Temple of Literature, too many middlemen in Sion, too many guides and dragomans jabbering at the foot of Parnassus. It may be said that they only dupe those who are set on being duped by someone; and it is likely enough that there is no real cure but time. Still, this question of the uses and abuses of criticism is, perhaps, also not unamusing in itself; and that I propose to discuss.

Criticism, of course, is a wide term. To begin with, it can include the vast field of reviewing; and the usefulness of that no one can question. We might feel that we could

do with less of it; but in the present spate of literature it is as necessary as the booksellers' catalogues it supplements. Reviewers are critics, among other things; though it is a very different task reviewing books that have not been read by the world, from re-viewing works it already knows. How different, indeed, too many reviewers seem to forget. For the reader wants first and above all to gather what he will himself think of the book—what is it like? shall I like it?—not what some reviewer thinks. It follows that an inch of quotation is usually worth an ell of opinion. But the race of reviewers seems afflicted with a morbid conscientiousness (at least, that is the most charitable explanation) which makes them feel they are defrauding their editors and their public if they quote much, instead of producing a complete line, all their own, for every penny paid them. The public might bear that deprivation more philosophically than they suppose. There are periodicals one could name, where the reviewers are so anxious to have views, so uncertain what they are, and so nervous lest anybody else should find out, that one comes in the end to read nothing in their articles except the quotations; which, unfortunately, are the one thing they grudge. For, alas, reviewers too are human and long to mount the tripod; forgetting that we want an idea of the book in question rather than their idea of it, and to discover what it is rather than what they think it ought to be. Still, reviewers are a side-issue in criticism; we could not do without them; and the modern standard of courtesy, tolerance, and good temper among them, unlike some grander critics, remains creditably high. Things are very different in this quarter from a century ago.

No less essential, again, are the literary historians and

biographers, who give us facts, not feelings; truths, not opinions. True, they sometimes behave as if they had graduated at the University of Laputa. 'Pepys's illnesses,' writes Mr. Ponsonby in an amusing passage, 'have been analysed by prominent physicians, a book written about his music, the sites of his houses searched for, his friends and acquaintances described, his own relations and his relations by marriage unearthed, his servants' genealogies extracted from registers, estimates made even of his stature calculated in relation to a giantess he once went to see.' This is certainly one of the abuses of modern criticism. The earth, indeed, seems filled with people who only read books in order to write books, as it is with others who only enter into conversation in order to talk themselves. Vain curiosity, the primal curse in Eden, becomes a cardinal virtue in the learned world. However, that is at least nothing new; little has changed since Montaigne wrote, three and a half centuries ago: 'This man, whom about midnight, when others take their rest, thou seest come out of his study, meagre-looking, with eyes trilling, flegmatick, squalide, and spauling, doest thou thinke that plodding on his books he doth seek how he shall become an honestest man, or more wise, or more content? There is no such matter. He will either die in his pursuit, or teach posterity the measure of Plautus's verses and the true orthography of a Latine word.' Fifteen centuries earlier still Seneca had already ridiculed the follies of the Homeric Question 'and other matters of the same stamp, which if you keep them to yourself, will not profit your inner life, and if you talk about them, will make you seem not a sage, but a bore.' Human futility knows no limits. It learns everything and forgets nothing, except common sense. There was once a

worthy Jesuit who bestowed infinite labour on making an alphabetical index of all the names of animals applied by the fathers to heretics. After all, it may have kept him out of worse mischief. Père Hardouin, again, persuaded himself with more than German thoroughness that the Classics were all forged except Homer, Herodotus, Plautus, Pliny, and fragments of Cicero (the *Æneid* and the *Odes* he also admitted; but they were not by Virgil or Horace); but as he persuaded no one else, here, too, no great harm is done. And what could surpass the young American scholar who recently presented to a novelist of my acquaintance, on her arrival in the United States, a list of all the words in her last work which would have been spelt differently on that side of the Atlantic?

Clearly, this sort of laborious imbecility, so persistent from age to age, must answer some deep human need; above all, perhaps, the need to avoid thinking. In any case, there is little to be done about it. Where there is learning, there will always be pedants also; and better that Mr. Pismire and Dr. Emmet should waste their lives—it is, after all, mainly their own affair—than that the leisure of others who know how to use it, should be inspected and curtailed. No great harm results. The two worst features of this side of criticism are, I think, the dragooning of the young in the name of 'Research', whether they are fitted for it by nature or not, to rake together some rubbish to exchange for a rubbishy degree; and, secondly, the tendency of the general public to read books about literature instead of literature itself. For it is always easier to sit down and read the latest biography of Shelley than *Prometheus Unbound*; partly because modern books demand less effort than older ones; partly because great literature, in particular, is seldom light reading. So

that a Jeremiah might foresee an age which will know everything about our great writers except their works.

But I am concerned really with criticism in its strictest sense—the expression of judgements or feelings about literature. And here at the very outset there is, I think, one vital distinction to be made. On the one hand, there are the critics who set out to say what is, they think, absolutely true, and whose work makes no claim to any literary value; on the other, those who say what is, at all events, true for themselves, and may delight us by their self-expression, as Montaigne delights us, even when we totally disagree. Those who like such words may call them respectively ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ This distinction is not, of course, a rigid one. There are infinite gradations between those who, like Anatole France, feel that they are simply writing a spiritual autobiography, as self-conscious as the *Confessions* of Rousseau, about their adventures among masterpieces, and those who, like Boileau, believe that literature can and must be judged by a code of iron laws; between the critics who approach the kingdom of the dead imaginatively as Orpheus might, and the critics who sit in judgement there, like Minos, Aeacus, and Rhadamanthus. And this is a difference far more important in practice than it is in theory. Critics may themselves have hazy views upon the point, or none at all; they may think they belong to one side and actually be champions of the other. But there remains, I think, a definite contrast between the criticism that is itself a by-form of literature, dealing with literature instead of with life directly; that sets out to please, and remembers the Graces; that is a creative utterance of the writer’s own feeling and imagination—between this and, on the other hand, the criticism that

tries to be scientifically cold, impersonal, and detached; that believes in absolute standards, and hopes to determine their laws; that attempts, *not* to express its writer's own feelings, but to impress the reader with the truth of his views. Though, as I say, a critic may not be really in the camp he thinks he is, or seems at first sight to be. Thus Dr. Johnson imagined he was uttering general and absolute truths; in consequence of which his critical work is fuller now of falsehoods than it need have been; but we read it to-day, not so much because it is still such good criticism, but because it is such good literature; because, though often obsolete in its judgements, it expresses him so well and wittily; because, in a word, it throws even more light on Johnson than on Gray or Donne. In the same way we read his account of the Hebrides, not as a guide-book, but as a book. The *Lives of the Poets* supplement Boswell. They are immortal for their combination of biography and autobiography; for their wit; and for their style. Johnson lives in confined quarters; but within their limits he is the most charming of hosts. Therefore, of all the critics of his age, he alone is frequented still.

Of course, this idea of criticism as a by-way of literature—an art, though an applied art, rather than a science—is nothing new. Johnson conformed to it in practice, despite his principles; Sainte-Beuve with open eyes, though with discretion: 'Pour nous, en effet, faut-il le trahir?—ce cadre où la critique, au sens exact du mot, n'intervient souvent que comme fort secondaire, n'est dans ce cas-là qu'une forme particulière et accommodée aux alentours, pour produire nos propres sentiments sur le monde et sur la vie, pour exhaler avec détour une certaine poésie cachée'. Thus the disappointed author

of *Volupté* and *Joseph Delorme* consoled himself by becoming the disguised novelist and poet of the *Lundis*. Are they the less great criticism for that? And after Sainte-Beuve, Anatole France in his turn yet more boldly avowed and defended the idea of the critic as autobiographer. But old as this view now is, it remains less familiar than the far older vision of the critic as a judge sitting, majestically periwigged, on the bench, not as a witness in the box. 'Judge', after all, is the original meaning of the word 'critic', and it is the business of a judge, not to give pleasure, but to administer justice. The Aristotles, the Scaligers, the Dennises, the Lockharts of criticism have all made general truth their object, and some of them utility also; it was their self-appointed task to discover the laws of literature and, usually, to see that these were kept. They do not lack would-be successors, still.

But, then, are there any laws? What Justinian or Napoleon has codified literature? Who set up judges over the poets? Are their judgements needful? Are they even helpful? How often can they be trusted even to be true? Perhaps I am by temperament too sceptical, too full of rebellion against all authorities and supposed experts, too unsociable and individualistic in a rooted hatred of all 'movements' and 'schools', coteries and conventicles, to be fair to criticism of this sort. For there can be no doubt that it is highly helpful to the coteries, at least: critical formulas they love and live on. By them they create; by them they judge what they have created to be perfect, and most other things worthless. But how far the judgements of critics have helped that real literature which has stood the only real test, the judgement of Time, remains much more doubtful; indeed, it would not be

difficult to argue, I think, without going so far as Flaubert and dismissing them as without exception worthless, that their verdicts have, on the whole, been less help than hindrance to the writers of the past.

Certainly the greatest works of Antiquity and of the Middle Ages, which, after all, can face comparison with anything modern, were produced in societies where professional criticism did not exist and would have been considered a very curious occupation for an able-minded human being: so that this midwifery of critics is clearly not essential to the safe delivery of genius, nor their nursing to its preservation. It was only in the autumn of the Ancient World that these buzzing creatures were first engendered: in declining Athens, in half-barbarous Alexandria, in Rome under the heel of the Caesars. Then it was that the first bright spirits appeared to demonstrate to an admiring world that Homer snored and Virgil stole. True, the first great philosophic critic, Aristotle, still bestrides us. In that prosaic work, his *Poetics*, there are brilliant things; its gift for asking the right questions, whatever one may think of some of the answers, remains very remarkable indeed. But on the whole, after years spent on it, it seems to me—will this sound very shocking?—an overrated book. How many of its conclusions are both true and important? Such generalizations about art—if one may hazard yet one more—are certainly entertaining; they are excellent subjects for after-dinner conversation, especially as no two people in a room ever agree about them. They will not hold water, but they make amusing paper-boats to launch on a stream of talk; they lead nowhere, but they provide very pretty excursions. The trouble comes when people will take them seriously; of that the history of the *Poetics* provides only

too many examples. Who can resist a smile at the religious fervour with which scholars since the Renaissance have found Aristotle always right, even when they have translated him wrong, and extolled the profound wisdom of opinions he never held? Subtle, but ponderous, like an elephant picking up pins, he remains, at all events, far more sensible and far less dogmatic (with much more right to be) than most of his successors on the philosophic side of criticism.

He has had a progeny like Abraham's—great names, often; and what have they produced? What single canon have all of their efforts established—of any practical value either for creating or for criticizing literature—that can command general acceptance to-day? What laws have these philosophers and scientists of literature discovered comparable with the laws of physics, however, shifting and fluid even these may be? The best that can be said for most academic criticism is that it has failed, as a rule, very successfully. It has won few triumphs for posterity to lament. Sidney failed to strangle the Elizabethan drama in its cradle; though the pedants for once, indeed, got the better of Corneille. Similarly, the Romantics outlive the judges who condemned them to death. And among the Romantics in their turn, what better, or worse, example could be found of the futility of trying to subject practice in literature to theory, than Wordsworth's famous preface about Poetic Diction? Small wonder that his arguments were proved bad by Coleridge, in a cause where no arguments could ever have been good; for who can *argue* a man into liking milk-pudding? And who, once more, can read now without a sense of hopeless weariness Arnold's exhortations to

poets to employ ancient subjects and the grand style, to be highly serious and to criticize life?

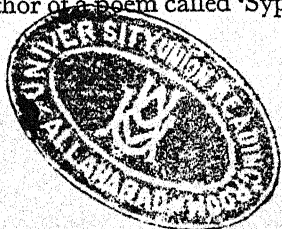
So with all the threadbare controversies about Artistic 'Imitation' and the Unities, about Classicism and Romanticism, about Art and Morality—they have dragged on, like the old wars of religion, to no end except (where they have at last ended) mere exhaustion, tolerance, and *laissez-faire*. All critical laws and verdicts, watchwords and catchwords, formulas and precepts reduce themselves at last, in Molière's wise phrase, to 'quelques observations aisées que le bon sens a faites sur ce qui *peut* ôter le plaisir que l'on prend à ces sortes de choses'.

Nor can it be urged that critics are much more reliable (if we seek any absolute truth) in their particular than in their general judgements. It might have been thought that, however weak their theories of what makes literature good, they would at least have an intuition for good literature when they saw it; as a man may be a master of billiards without understanding dynamics, or a judge of wines without knowing how grapes grow or the tongue tastes them. To some extent this is true; but reliable they are not. The wisdom of critics is mainly after the event. It is not they who choose the great writers (that is done by time and the common reader): they only praise, expound, and comment on them when chosen. Even the deft fingers of a Coleridge, a Sainte-Beuve, or an Arnold, however skilful at embalming or dissecting the dead, have made some nasty slips in handling the living. And not the living only. It would make a most illuminating anthology, if someone—may it soon be done!—would collect all the verdicts of famous critics that time has turned to derision; it might

even, if anything could, inspire a few momentary doubts in the minds of some of their living successors. What name, for instance, more eminent in criticism than Coleridge?—who yet found Gibbon's prose detestable and Tennyson ignorant of what metre was; who could discover nothing 'sublime' in Greek literature and was so grotesquely inappreciative of French, as to give public thanks to God in a London lecture that he could not pronounce a line of the language—much as if a man should claim to be publicly admired for going about with one eye shut. Think, again, of Hazlitt, unable 'to make head or tail' of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*; dismissing Racine as one who cannot 'lay bare the heart', and simply 'reads lectures out of a commonplace book'; of De Quincey with his talk of 'the prodigious defects of the French in all the higher qualities of prose composition', and of the inferiority of Voltaire to Horace Walpole, denouncing Keats for having 'trampled upon his mother-tongue as with the hoofs of a buffalo': of Swinburne, shocked by *Venus and Adonis* and by Walt Whitman, calling Euripides 'a mutilated monkey', and Ibsen 'a Fracastoro¹ of the drama'.

There is no need to multiply examples. One would think there were warnings enough for any modern critic, with the slightest knowledge of his predecessors, against undue dogmatism. Do they suppose themselves gifted with more wisdom than Johnson, or more genius than Coleridge? The only conclusion, I should have thought, must be a boundless scepticism. That would not prevent one *feeling* vigorous likes and dislikes of one's own as strongly as ever; but to *think* that one can impose them as valid on other people! And yet living critics continue

¹Fracastoro (sixteenth century), author of a poem called 'Syphilis'.



to utter their general statements about literature and their judgements on individuals with the same complete self-assurance as of old. 'Poetry is rhythm in touch with the absolute'; 'Poetry is love speaking musically'; 'Art demands a bleak and uncompromising daylight for its operations' ('Kubla Khan', for example?); 'That it may survive, poetry must be anonymous; it must be strictly, religiously impersonal' (like Catullus, or Villon, or Byron?); 'Nothing rational is beautiful' (a view certainly prevalent among modern poets)—there is no need to lavish quotations. Our weekly and monthly periodicals hum with them; and any one, with a little practice, could turn them out by the hour. The complacent attitude to Art of those who write such things always reminds me of Flaubert's description of bourgeois at the sea-side: 'des "môseurs" à lunettes d'or, lisant le journal, et de temps à autre, entre deux lignes, savourant l'immensité avec un air d'approbation'. It is, indeed, just the sort of criticism to be written for, or by, Bouvard and Pécuchet. The Bouvards and Pécuchets, with their credulous and pathetic longing to know the last word about everything, whether it can be known or not, find a perfect balm in stark, dogmatic statements. A new generalization, whether true or not, gives them a sense of mastery over the Universe. And jargon, again, is for them a sort of magic; the demon is in your power, once you have uttered his mystic name. So that these sublime pronouncements are twice-blessed: they please the author, sunning himself on the eminence of a private Sinai; they please the hearer, with all the joys of illumination, discipleship, and feeling superior to the uninitiate vulgar—the usual motives on which crank religions thrive. And so this sort of criticism is highly successful still. For the

Bouvards and Pécuchets must have their certainties, in hard black and white. Not for them to rest with Montaigne 'on the pillow of doubt': they want the Philosopher's Stone at the bottom of a saucepan. Thus criticism ends by becoming, as it were, the theology or the alchemy of Art. That does not imply that it becomes at the same time consciously insincere. What people in fact mean when they talk of poetry being 'in touch with the Absolute', or 'Love speaking musically', is that they quite genuinely wish to pay compliments (surely superfluous) to poetry; and, in their frenzy to avoid the banal, they use vague and abstract words, preferably of as many syllables as possible, to the end that their readers may understand as little as themselves, and the honour and glory of poetry be enhanced by such metaphysical noises. And, again, what people in fact mean when they say that 'Art demands a bleak and uncompromising daylight', or 'impersonality', is that they themselves demand these things; being, or wishing to be, or wishing to appear to be, severe intellectuals with none of your sentimental nonsense about them. But then, why not say 'I demand', instead of 'Art demands'? It would sound less impressive, no doubt; but then these remarks would become true, which is surely some advantage; they might become even interesting. But these gentlemen are so modest—in some ways—about speaking for themselves.

Of course, now too, as in the past, it might be urged by one who admitted most of their generalizations to be nonsense, that the practice of modern critics was better than their theories. It might even be better because of them; as scientists may be helped by working hypotheses, though actually incorrect; or as poets may gain a certain

depth and unity from philosophies which must often, if not always, be false. But that does not seem to me in fact the case. Critics with creeds can seldom resist the temptation to become dogmatic and fanatic, damning anything outside their own synagogue; and doctrinaire criticism is, I think, even less justified by its actual works than by its faith. For example—since it is necessary to take one—the most esteemed, by the intelligentsia, of modern critics is Mr. T. S. Eliot, a writer of wide learning and unquestionable sincerity, whose two chief critical works, *The Sacred Wood* and *For Lancelot Andrewes*, contain such statements as these:

We can only say that Keats and Shelley would *probably* have become great poets, poets on a much greater scale than Crashaw: judging them on their accomplishment only, Crashaw was a finished master, and Keats and Shelley were apprentices with immense possibilities before them.

There may be a good deal to be said for Romanticism in life, there is no place for it in letters.

‘Emotion recollected in tranquillity’ is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor, without distortion of meaning, tranquillity.

(Of the ‘savage comic humour’ of Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta*, as completed by the last words of Barabas:

But now begins th’ extremity of heat
To pinch me with intolerable pangs:
Die, life! fly, soul! tongue, curse thy fill, and die!)

It is something which Shakespeare could not do, and which he could not have understood.

(Of *Hamlet*.)

So far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece, the play is most certainly an artistic failure.

(Again of *Hamlet*.)

The character has had an especial temptation for that most dangerous type of critic: the critic with a mind which is naturally of the creative order, but which through some weakness in creative power exercises itself in criticism instead. . . . Such a mind had Goethe, who made of *Hamlet* a Werther; and such had Coleridge, who made of *Hamlet* a Coleridge.

There are people who would put up, at a pinch, with 'a weakness in creative power' as great as Goethe's; and who are too dull to see how it is better to regard *Hamlet* as 'a failure' than to regard him as a Werther. And it is hard, too, to resist an indiscreet curiosity whether Mr. Eliot thinks himself a better judge in this than Coleridge or Goethe on the theory that he has himself no creative power; or on the theory that he has no weaknesses in it. Be that as it may, when a critic finds in 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' or the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' prentice-work inferior to Crashaw; and expunges Romanticism from literature with a stroke of his pen; and knows better than Wordsworth himself how Wordsworth felt when writing poetry; and prefers *Coriolanus* to *Hamlet*; and can tell us for certain that Shakespeare could not have written parts of *The Jew of Malta*, or even understood them; it becomes pretty clear that he has not, as they say, got up at three every morning merely in order to think like everybody else. I suppose if one hazarded the suggestion that it is rather belated now to dismiss as a failure a play like *Hamlet* that has fascinated

its public for generations, Mr. Eliot might reply, like the character in Dorat's *Les Prôneurs*:

Quant au public, son joug vous tient-il donc courbé?
Le public est, monsieur, terriblement tombé.

And, of course, Mr. Eliot's ideas of beauty are true for him. If he feels like that, he feels like that. One may suspect these *goûts d'alcôve* of being sometimes slightly factitious; still, one cannot prove that. But to be expected to accept such views as absolute general truths is at first a little staggering. True, one quickly grows hardened; after being told what Shakespeare could not have understood, one learns with comparative calm that he is less 'sane' than Dante; that Machiavelli was 'innocent' and 'pure in heart' ('only the pure in heart can blow the gaff on human nature as Machiavelli has done'); that human goodness is 'a myth', but the divine right of kings 'a noble faith'; that Hobbes was 'an extraordinary little upstart'; and that it is 'an unanswerable argument' against determinism that it 'makes praise and blame meaningless'. Why should they not be meaningless? Certainly as a critic Mr. Eliot does his best to make them so.

It might, of course, be urged that a critic can easily seem more dogmatic than he means to be. He may be intending to speak only for himself. He cannot be expected to add at the tail of every sentence: 'or, at least, so it seems to me'. But that plea cannot cover the tone of passages such as occur in the introduction to Mr. Eliot's selection from Ezra Pound: 'I have met very few people in my life who really care for poetry. . . . Most people will find in this book things that they like and things that they dislike; only persons who like poetry and have

trained themselves to like poetry will like it at all. And of such persons there are not many.' Here, to be sure, is the living echo of Bramston's 'Man of Taste':

This is true taste, and whoso likes it not,
Is blockhead, coxcomb, puppy, fool, and sot.

The book in question would, indeed, have been none the worse, had its editor devoted a little less space to celebrating his own excellences, and a little more time to correcting the howlers that disfigure its classical quotations. Such things are trifling enough in themselves; but Mr. Eliot can hardly expect special indulgence, after ordering Mr. Whibley to execution for a simple phrase of two words—'a critic would not use so careless a phrase as "Tasso's masterpiece"'. Indeed, we all stand in grave peril: 'It might be said in our time that a man who cannot enjoy Pope as poetry, probably understands no poetry'. Here is a wholesale banishment among the Goths hanging over our heads. Pope would doubtless have smiled with pleasure to hear such a judgement; but I trust he would also have had the sense to laugh a little. For how can any rational being make such enormous statements? As certitude follows certitude on these pages, and hyperbole hyperbole, I find myself murmuring again and again, like the Marquise whose husband was pontificating at dinner about the intimate relations of Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon: 'Eh bien, Monsieur, que faites-vous pour être si sûr de ces choses-là?' Mr. Eliot has himself observed that 'English criticism is inclined to argue or persuade, rather than to state'. It is possible that this may be a smaller fault than he supposes; but certainly he will be acquitted of it.

This unfortunate side of the criticism of Mr. Eliot and

his school is due, I think, partly to their very zeal for the good cause, and to their conception, of which something has been said above, of critics as commissioned to improve and reform mankind. They see themselves as defending the Capitol from the Gauls, the faith from the infidel. 'The Charles Louis Philippes of English literature are never done with,' writes Mr. Eliot, in the tone of a weary Hercules, 'because there is no one to kill their reputations; we still hear that George Meredith is a master of prose, or even a profound philosopher. The creative artist in England finds himself compelled, or at least tempted, to spend much of his time and energy in criticism that he might reserve for the perfecting of his proper work: simply because there is no one else to do it.'

It would be interesting to hear the names of a few of these creative artists who so nobly allowed their lives to be blighted in the sacred cause of 'killing reputations' lest English literature should go to the dogs. I suppose Mr. Eliot is thinking, among others, of himself. But who *are* the others? Matthew Arnold? Was it criticism that dried up the stream of his poetry? If so, more's the pity. But I know no reason to think so. And why this duty of 'killing reputations'? If they can be killed, would they not die naturally, even if let alone? And *can* they be killed in any case? Was Bentley so wrong in his brave saying that no man was ever written down except by himself? And why should any sane being, fortunate enough to be able to produce living work of his own, feel 'compelled' or even 'tempted' to take a tearful farewell of his Muse in order to go 'killing reputations'? It is a delightful picture, surely—the republic of letters in danger, and English literature screaming to be rescued from the reputation of Mr. Meredith. So the Aztec kings

swore at the new year to keep the sun in its proper courses, and the monks in Rabelais watched to protect the moon from the wolves.

The truth is, I think, that critics are extremely impotent in either giving or destroying reputations of any permanence; and we should surely be thankful that it is so. My blood runs cold at the idea of a dictator of English letters, whether Mr. Eliot—what visions of hungry multitudes being fed on Crashaw and Lancelot Andrewes, and even smaller Anglican and Catholic fishes!—or anybody else, however wise and good. And if it is improbable that critics do much good to the world by assuming the style of self-appointed censors and inquisitors, it seems to me that they certainly do themselves a good deal of harm. It is easy to enjoy being a Jeremiah. The taste is soon acquired, and that mantle had already got pretty threadbare by the end of the last century after passing through so many hands. Such prophets come in the end to look about for reasons for weeping over Jerusalem. For one thing, there are so many cinemas. Or again, Marvell *'était une belle âme, comme on ne fait plus à Londres'*. How on earth do we know (even if Marvell, for that matter, had been *'fait à Londres'*)? Or again: 'Matthew Arnold was intelligent, and by so much difference as the presence of one intelligent man makes, our age is inferior to that of Arnold'. Which must mean, if anything at all, either that there was one intelligent man alive in 1850, and not one now, or that by some very odd coincidence all intelligent men who have died since 1850 have been replaced by others, except one. For why else is our age 'inferior'? It seems strange, in this world, to be so hard put to it to find themes for lamentation. 'My great

ambition,' writes Horace Walpole, in anticipation of old age, 'is not to grow cross'. It is not a very ambitious ambition, but I know few as sensible, especially for critics.

But even worse than the melancholy gloom of this kind of criticism, is its religious grimness. Literature, which one fondly imagined to be a kind of pleasure, turns out to be a sort of mortification of the spirit. The great words of praise are 'serious' and 'impersonal'; 'the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality'. The artists and writers I have known have been persons whose personality was anything but extinct; however, perhaps they were false brethren, wolves in sheep's clothing. But surely, in fact, there are artists of all sorts and conditions, from Byron to Jane Austen; why should they all be as alike as so many peas? And as for the appreciation of their work, I would rather a man approached it as a plum-pudding than as a sacrament; according to that excellent title of one of Herrick's poems: 'To live merrily, and to trust to Good Verses'. But your critical Savonarolas will have no Abbeys of Thelema; they write of the joys of literature like poor Maupertuis who '*écrivait sur le bonheur d'une manière à faire pleurer*'. Indeed, in his latest book, Mr. Eliot speaks in a curious sentence of 'the dreary cemetery' of literature. That he should find it so, I cannot wonder; but that he should admit it even to himself, seems very remarkable, even allowing for that sincerity which is a redeeming feature of his work. Or was it just badinage? I can hardly think so. Sometimes I have wondered whether such critics really hate all literature subconsciously (if one dare use the word), with a Platonic and Puritanic hatred; and find some outlet

for their feelings in putting the Muses on bread and water. Equally severe and austere, to take another instance, is Mr. Herbert Read, who finds in Jane Austen 'the atmosphere of a marionnette's opera—an atmosphere that explains the charm which Jane Austen undeniably exercises on people whose particular need is to be amused in a recondite way. Such people have a sophisticated love of "mere quaintness", and seek this quality in all the arts.' It is a pity Miss Austen should so fail to amuse Mr. Read; for Mr. Read might have amused Miss Austen a good deal. Most people, not professional critics, in his position would say: 'I have a blind spot for Jane Austen'. Everybody has blind spots for somebody. I believe, for instance, one might compile quite a distinguished list of persons, dead and living, who have found the poetry of Shelley hysterical, without, however, proclaiming the fact like Matthew Arnold on the house-tops; for, after all, Shelley must have immense qualities, however little one may see them, or he could not have lasted as he has. One might as well call 'ineffectual' a crane that had lifted thousands of tons continuously for the last fifty years.

But our Torquemadas will hear of no such pleas; and Mr. Read, in his *English Prose Style*, from which the above condemnation of Jane Austen comes, orders writers to the block right and left for lapses in their style, with a rigour perhaps slightly excessive in the author of a sentence like: 'Once started on a trend of close reasoning, even the break of a paragraph may be disconcerting'. Was it Congreve who said?—

Rules for good writing they with pain indite,
Then show us what is bad by what they write.

At all events the strange conclusion of the book: 'In fact,

all that is necessary for clear reasoning and good style is personal sincerity', may be thought, as far as reasoning goes, to refute itself.

That, however, is by the way. My object has been to urge by specific examples that modern criticism, both in its generalizations and its individual judgements, seems to have learnt very little caution from the disasters of its predecessors; and that we need far more scepticism. There is neither space nor need to give further instances of the same lack of restraint, from the wounded bellowings of Mr. Wyndham Lewis or Mr. Lawrence. The vigour of Mr. Lawrence's creative work is not here in point; he seems to me a painter of the Stone Age (where Mr. Eliot is a monastic scribe of the Middle Age), and preferable as more alive. For I prefer cave men to 'hollow men'. But neither seems to me 'civilized', and a critic, I feel, needs particularly to be that. For Criticism is by nature, though not in years, the most elderly and the most sophisticated of the Muses; and what she lacks in youth and fire and beauty, she can only make up for by wisdom and restraint and grace.

But, after all, that some modern critics should stultify themselves by being so doctrinaire, need not matter much to any one but themselves. The harm lies, I think, rather in the effect of too much criticism on the creative writers and, much more, the public of to-day.

No doubt every creative writer must be in some degree a critic, too; every revision of a man's own work entails self-criticism. But there may come a point where the critic in him rises up and strangles the creator—cramps his style, paralyses his daring, gives him a mental stammer. The more self-conscious and sophisticated the age he lives in, the greater the danger. To quote Flaubert

once more: 'Ce qui nous manque, c'est l'audace. À force de scrupules, nous ressemblons à ces pauvres dévots qui ne vivent pas de peur de l'enfer, et qui réveillent leur confesseur de grand matin pour s'accuser d'avoir eu la nuit des rêves amoureux.' There are hundreds of authors at work to-day who would never fall into the lapses of taste that mar page after page of Shakespeare; the technical slovenlinesses of Wordsworth would shock a modern writer of magazine verse. But we remain even more incapable of such greatness than of such faults. One does not travel far, if one takes one's own temperature at every step. 'Par l'analyse,' writes Amiel, 'je me suis annulé'.

Still, this is not an objection on which great stress can be laid. Critics will not cease criticizing, and the public will not cease paying them for it, just because they cramp creative writers. And after all an author of any real force will triumph over this difficulty, as Flaubert himself did. A Demosthenes will learn to speak, even with a pebble in his mouth. It is the hampering effect of too much criticism on the very public which it pretends to help, that seems to me a more serious indictment.

To begin with, too critical an attitude is liable to destroy the spontaneity of a reader's response. Molière read his plays to an old woman; so, centuries before, on the other side of the world, did Po-chu-i with his poems. They were not merely being capricious. They knew what they were about. Watch a cultivated audience at a play, in London or Cambridge, and listen to their conversation in the intervals—the febrile, intellectual snobbery, the desire to attract attention by some peculiar view, the assertion of superiority by some contemptuous epigram, the slavish fear of backing the wrong horse and praising

where it may prove smarter to have sneered. It is all very entertaining, but also a little nauseous. The naked human rage for superiority is not pretty, when its wrappings of politeness slip down and leave it bare. 'The Universalists,' said the Calvinist old woman, 'expect everybody to be saved; but we look for better things'. It is not only the religious who feel like that. No doubt, in a far less critical society this tendency would still in some degree be there. 'Plus il y a d'hommes ensemble, plus ils sont vains, et sentent naître en eux l'envie de se signaler par de petites choses.' But the present age seems to suffer particularly from this malady. Madame du Deffand divided mankind into 'trompeurs, trompés, et trompettes': we have too many of the last.

Spontaneity, again, even if it escapes this critical snobbery, may still suffer from overmuch analysis. One may come to acquire a sort of mental X-ray apparatus which reveals in everything one meets the underlying skeleton. Every guest at the feast becomes a death's head. I know by experience how the spectre of Aristotle may follow one into every theatre, bothering one with reflections that never trouble the rapt absorption of one's less sophisticated neighbours. True, the habit may be overcome; for good criticism, it surely must be. For the critic, like the poet, must work with 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'; giving sympathy and surrender, if possible, at the moment, and judgement only afterwards. But this suspension of disapproval is easier to talk of than to practise; and nibbling at criticism clearly results for many in less pleasure, not more taste.

Further, there is, I believe, a real danger of distortion in that dragging of certain reactions from the subconscious up into consciousness, which a great deal of

criticism deliberately sets out to accomplish. In a poem, for instance, certain nuances of association, or of rhythm, may be only dimly felt by the ordinary reader; and rightly so: focus the attention on them, and the total effect becomes quite different. Those who practise such analyses, sometimes claim that their enjoyment is thereby increased. But one may wonder whether they do not enjoy the fruit, really, because they like climbing the tree; partly for the exercise, partly for the eminence. Here, again, personal taste clearly comes into play; certainly unsuspected beauties of form are sometimes revealed by such dissections. But this sort of anatomy can easily be overdone, and one is too often reminded by its results of Swift's hideous jest about the woman whose appearance was so strangely altered for the worse by being flayed. 'Quel fléau pour la poésie qu'un géomètre!' as Madame Dacier feelingly observed. I retain a prejudice for looking at pictures not too much through microscopes, and a suspicion that, except where the lapse of years has brought obscurity, a message that needs much explaining seldom merits it. This is no very eccentric view. Surely Keats felt the same when he made his exclamation that 'Philosophy would pluck an angel's wing'; and Goethe, when he observed: 'One must ask children and birds how cherries and strawberries taste'. True, they cannot tell one, ask as one will, since their tongues are more for taste than speech; and certainly there are sophisticated tastes also, which can only be painfully acquired, and are worth acquiring even painfully; but we are too prone to assume that we necessarily add cubits to the stature of our artistic appreciation by taking great thought about it. In literature (and throughout I am speaking only of that and of no other arts—

I know too little of the rest) there are heavens, I believe, only to be entered by those who can retain or recapture the fresh simplicity of youth.

Nor is the objection simply to overmuch anatomy and introspection in reading literature or seeing drama; too much criticism seems to me to lead also to a certain dulling of real sensitiveness in another way as well. For it is not the most sensitive who will chatter most about their artistic sensations. There is such a thing as reticence. 'What is set out for show, is half sold,' and hearts worn on sleeves soon grow dry and dusty. Here, too, it is apt to be the Regans and Gonerils who talk most glibly. That, at least, is my own conclusion, after years of lecturing: there are feelings one does not want to publish, feelings that one has blunted by doing so. And, above all, these stupid controversies about the merits of authors (as if such things could possibly be proved) lead only to dust and desolation. It is as if rhinoceroses had done battle on one's favourite rose-bed; only a rhinoceros could bear to do it. Indeed, I feel that a parallel could be drawn, by no means unforcibly, between the relation of professional critics to literature and that of professional courtesans to love.

These doubts of the benefits of criticism lead naturally to another: the question of criticism in education, and the teaching of taste. And here, too, there is room for misgivings, which will hardly be lessened by a recent brilliant book of Mr. I. A. Richards: *Practical Criticism*. There stand embodied the comments of a number of undergraduates on pieces of poetry thrown them to devour. Several conclusions emerge: that a considerable proportion of educated English youth cannot understand English; that their taste is a Babel of contradictions

(there is nothing strange in that); and that whatever good they had derived from the 'study of criticism', many of them acquired a great deal of that critical cant and snobbery which have been discussed above, coupled with a vulgarity in expressing them which was all their own. It seemed to me a condemnation of the whole system that could produce a type of mind so bursting with opinions, yet so ignorant of the necessary facts—so ready to judge without ever having learnt to appreciate. A freshman who has read Nicolson's *Tennyson* (an admirable work in itself) tends to regard himself as thereby dispensed from reading Tennyson's poetry, and entitled to lavish contempt on the poet, his views, his verse, and the whole age he lived in. By all means let us smile at the absurdities of the last age; but only on condition that we are equally ready to smile at our own. But the paradox seems eternal by which criticism induces in many minds the most uncritical sort of self-sufficiency and arrogance. No doubt it would be exaggerated to take too seriously the *boutades* of a lecture-class; it is not the most intelligent type of person who rushes in most eagerly to answer this sort of questionnaire; and in any case, the young must be allowed to be young, and the road to sense lies for everyone through a series of follies. But one may still ask whether the critical mania of the age has not sown here, too, its tares; leading us to try to make the young critical instead of cultivated. I should have supposed that the main object of reading English literature at the University would be to become well-read. As for taste, any one with the natural capacity might be expected to gain that automatically in the process—by simple experience. For I doubt if taste can be taught directly to any extent; and I doubt still more

if the way to teach it is to lecture people on such matters as why bad poetry is bad, and silly judgements silly. All that seems so negative. It is rather like thinking it necessary to lecture children on the childishness of dolls and lollipops; surely they may be left to grow out of them! Adult interests will catch their attention, and they will quietly put away childish things. So with literature; put its best things in the path of the young, and trust to its beauty working on them as unconsciously as Nature's beauty on Wordsworth's Lucy. I would far rather a young man spent his time reading *The Earthly Paradise* on his back in a punt (I do not say he could not do better) than stewing over *The Criterion*. Whether, indeed, English Literature should be *taught* in Universities at all, is an open question. In schools it must be, for the sake of the children of the Philistines. But when it comes to lectures to young men on something as difficult and delicate as taste, I remember with apprehension the man in Tchekov who must needs teach his kitten how to catch mice; with the result that it fled ever after at the sight of one. In the same way Lord Chesterfield, after long years of letters and lectures on 'the Graces', produced a young man who ate gooseberries at a dinner-party out of the dish. Lectures on literature are terribly apt to become like char-à-banc trips to Grasmere. 'The dons,' said Samuel Butler, 'are too busy educating the young men to teach them anything'. And that is particularly the danger with a subject like literature. Sometimes I have a sort of nightmare of the future, in which there are lectures on how to look on scenery, and how to see jokes, and how to make love; lectures for teaching roses how to grow and noses how to smell them; with discussions of the opinion of some unborn Mr. Eliot that

roses are sentimental and malodorous, compared with the perfume of the prickly pear.

However, the place of criticism in education is a minor point; its position in the modern world at large is what seems to me so excessive. We squander on it an amount of time and energy we can ill afford; and for lack of a little ordinary scepticism we encourage in its supposed experts an arrogance as ugly as it is imbecile. But there remains another side of criticism, already mentioned—its artists, those who, instead of vying with astrologer and alchemist, see that literature makes an excellent subject for literature, however little it lends itself to science. Look back on the literary criticism of the past: how much of it survives because of its literary, not its critical, worth—for its happy style or vigorous expression of its author's personality! Longinus and Horace, Boileau and Pope; Sidney's *Apology* and Shelley's *Defence*; the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* and the *Lives of the Poets*—is it too much to say that their ideas are no longer new, and often untrue, and yet we read them for the pleasure they still give? Even as criticism, the wildest judgements of Pepys on Shakespeare are worth volumes of modern verbiage, because they are so genuine and true for Pepys, if now for no one else. So with Fontenelle, when he dismisses Aeschylus as 'une espèce de fou'; so with Johnson on *Lycidas*. We shake our heads, but we read on; for Fontenelle and Johnson have more force and charm than fifty 'correcter' critics put together; and it is force and charm that matter ultimately in criticism, as in any other form of literature. All the wiseacres who write so hideously their treatises on the beautiful, have their little vogue and pass; while a Sainte-Beuve, too subtle to get tangled in any system, too sceptical to call his work by any more

pretentious name than *Causeries du Lundi*, lives on above their dust. Those weekly 'talks' will soon have lasted out their century. He had, in the end, no principles, no formulas; 'il craindrait' (said Taine of him) 'de froisser la vérité en l'enfermant dans des formules'; he used none of that jargon dear to mediocrities, who will not recognize that subtle thinking does *not* entail complicated language. Not imagining himself a scientist, he did not conceive himself licensed to be a barbarian or a bore; not thinking of literature as a sort of religion, he did not talk of it in tones borrowed from the sacristy. There are critics who could be taken more seriously, if they took their subject less so; no one will accuse Boileau of undervaluing his art—and yet it was he who once humorously remarked: 'Il faut avouer que j'ai deux grands talents, l'un de jouer aux quilles, l'autre de bien faire des vers'.

Is it then claiming too little for criticism, or asking too much of it, to suggest that those who practise it should cultivate enough good sense and good taste to regard their calling as a minor art, but still an art—something which will add pleasure, not peevishness, to life; which will look for new beauties rather than new truths? It is the poet's business, said Sidney, to make 'the much-loved earth more lovely'; it is the critic's business—the most truly useful part of it—to do the same for the much-loved world of letters. To point out the elusive greatness, for instance, of a writer like Racine is so much more valuable than finding faults, or cramping the godhead of Apollo within the limits of some petty aesthetic creed. That utility, and the pleasure good criticism can give in itself, seem to me the real reasons for writing it; it becomes a mixture of portrait-painting and autobiography, of table-talk and poetry. And such is in fact the best

criticism of to-day. It is no imaginary or vanished ideal that is here in question. The critical work of Mrs. Woolf or Mr. Strachey provides admirable examples of what seems to me the true tradition. But partly because their main reputation rests elsewhere, partly because they are eminently readable and ride no high horses and parade no erudition and talk no sounding jargon, their criticism is generally regarded as somehow less serious; where, in fact, it seems to me the only kind worth writing. Different ages suffer from different sorts of charlatanism; sometimes they are religious, sometimes they are political. It may be an illusion to suppose that our time is afflicted with more than its share of the literary kind; there may have been just as much critical cant fifty years ago, now simply forgotten. But I doubt it. In any case the educated world to-day is, I feel, too full of persons who have been or are being, in Blake's excellent phrase, 'connoisseured out of their senses'; too full of criticism which provokes any mind in the least critical to exclaim, as Hazlitt to William Gifford: 'But you, sir, are a nuisance and should be abated'.

THE EDITOR

ABOUT A HUNDRED
NEW BOOKS

The following list—out of a decidedly promising publishing season—includes some books not yet published and a few which have been already reviewed. To pretend that it comprises ‘the pick of the publishing season’ would be absurd, but every one of the books mentioned stands a good chance of being well worth reading, and some, even if they have not yet appeared, are almost certain to prove to be good books. Books which the compiler of the list has had the opportunity of examining have inevitably been given some preference.

ART AND ARCHÆOLOGY

Problems of Place-name Study. A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton. Cambridge Press.

A History of Early Chinese Art. Dr. Osvold Siren. 4 vols. Vol. I: The Prehistoric Period; Neolithic Pottery; The Beginnings of Ornamental Art in Bronze and Stone; The Art of the Chou and Ch'ing Periods. Benn. £3 13s. 6d. each vol. or £12 12s. the set.

From Toulouse-Lautrec to Rodin: with some Personal Impressions. Arthur Symons. Illustrated. Lane. 15s.

The Fasti of Ovid. Text with translation and commentary by Sir James George Frazer. 5 vols. Macmillan. £6 6s. A study of Roman religion planned on the grand scale of all Sir James Frazer's work.

Rock Paintings from South Africa. George William Slow. Methuen. £2 2s. Prehistoric art surviving into recent times.

Sandro Botticelli and the Florentine Renaissance. Yukio Yashiro. Cheap ed. Medici Society. £2 10s. A thorough study of Botticelli which also contains discussions of modern aesthetic theories. It is a new cheap edition of an important work.

Two Books on Costume:

English Costume of the Nineteenth Century. Drawn by Iris Brooke.
Described by James Laver. *Black.* 6s.

Modes and Manners: Ornaments. Max von Boehm. Translated by
M. M. Bozman. *Illus. Dent.* 15s.

BIOGRAPHY, MEMOIRS, LETTERS

The Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice. Ed. by Stephen
Gwynn. 2 vols. *Constable.* 42s.

The Stricken Deer: Study of William Cowper. Lord David Cecil.
Constable.

The Letters of Disraeli to Lady Chesterfield and Lady Bradford. Ed. by
Marquess of Zetland. 2 vols. *Benn.* 42s.

Peter the Great. Stephen Graham. *Benn.* 21s.

Frederick the Great. Werner Hegemann. *Constable.* 18s.

Richelieu. Hilaire Belloc. *Benn.* 25s.

The Third Mary Stuart (1622-94). Marjorie Bowen. *Lane.* 18s.

The Countess Tolstoy's Later Diary. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

The Memoirs of Lorenzo da Ponte. (Mozart's librettist.) Gollancz. Abt. 18s.

A Book About Myself. Theodore Dreiser. *Constable.* 10s. Stodgy, but
extraordinarily truthful, and reveals modern America.

Coleridge, the Somnambulist. John Charpertier. Translated by May
Nugent. *Constable.* 15s.

The Life of Solomon. Edmond Fleg. Gollancz. 50s.

Isadora Duncan's End. Mary Desti. *Illus. Gollancz.* 15s.

King Spider: A Life of Louis XI of France. D. B. Wyndham Lewis.
Heinemann. 15s.

Walter Rathenau. Count Harry Kessler. Translated by W. D. Robson-
Scott and Lawrence Hyde. *Illus. Gerald Howe.* 16s.

James Ramsay MacDonald: Labour's Man of Destiny. H. Hessel
Tiltman. *Illus. Jarrolds.* 21s.

The Life of the Marquess of Lansdowne. Lord Newton. *Illus. Macmillan.*
25s.

The Life of George Meredith. Robert Esmonde Sencourt. *Chapman &
Hall.* 16s.

When— (Autobiography). J. L. Pole. *Chapman & Hall.* 12s. 6d.

Lord D'Abernon's Diary. Vol. II. The Years of Crisis. *Hodder &
Stoughton.* 21s.

Three Personal Records of the War. R. H. Mottram. John Easton and Eric Partridge. *Scholartis Press*. 15s.

My Seventy-Five. Paul Lintier. *Peter Davies's 'Soldier's Tales'*. 7s. 6d.

The Letters of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Ed. by F. W. Hilles. *Cambridge Press*. Abt. 10s. 6d.

A Nineteenth-Century Childhood. Mary MacCarthy. New ed. *Secker*. 3s. 6d.

Diaries of William Johnstone Temple (Boswell's friend), 1780-96. *Oxford Press*. 21s.

Lord Durham. C. W. New. *Oxford Press*. 25s.

The Life of Tolstoy—Later Years. Aylmer Maude. *Milford*.

The Diary of a Country Parson. Vol. IV. Ed. by John Beresford. *Milford*. 12s. 6d. A fresh instalment of this delightful diary.

Benjamin Disraeli. Monypenny and Buckle. Cheap ed. *Murray*. 21s.

Elizabeth Browning: Letters to her sister. Ed. by Leonard Huxley. *Murray*. 21s.

Journal of a West Indian Proprietor. Monk Lewis. Ed. by Mona Wilson. *Routledge*. 12s. 6d. Coleridge thought this one of the best modern books of descriptive travel he had read.

CRITICISM AND BELLES LETTRES

Do What you Will. Aldous Huxley. *Chatto & Windus*. 7s. 6d.

Cross Currents in English Literature of the Seventeenth Century. H. J. C. Grierson. *Chatto & Windus*. 15s. With this goes a reprint of *The Poems of John Donne*. Ed. by H. J. C. Grierson. *Milford*. 6s. At last a cheap edition of the standard text!

The Wet Flanders Plain. Henry Williamson. *Faber & Faber*. 5s. A good war book.

The Proving of Psyche. Hugh I'Anson Fausset. *Cape*. 12s. 6d. Mr. Fausset is a first-rate literary psychologist and examines in this book the modern self-consciousness.

Baudelaire and the Symbolists. Peter Quennell. *Chatto & Windus*. 7s. 6d. Readers of *Life and Letters* have already seen one chapter of this book on Arthur Rimbaud.

A Writer's Notes on His Trade. C. E. Montague. Intro. by H. M. Tomlinson. *Chatto & Windus*. Abt. 50s.; and

C. E. Montague: A Memoir. By Oliver Elton. *Chatto & Windus*. 12s. 6d. These two works together complete a picture of Montague's personality.

Conversations with George Moore. Geraint Goodwin. *Benn*. 10s. 6d.

- Addresses* by A. C. Bradley. Macmillan. 12s. 6d.
- Andrew Marvell*. V. Sackville-West. Faber & Faber. 3s. 6d.; and
Dante. T. S. Eliot. Faber & Faber. 3s. 6d. The latest volumes in the
series 'The Poets on the Poets'.
- The Thing*. G. K. Chesterton. Sheed & Ward. 7s. 6d.
- Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature*. Vol. IX, for the
year 1928. Ed. by Miss E. Seaton. Bowes & Bowes. 6s. 6d.
- A Room of One's Own*. Virginia Woolf. Hogarth Press. 5s.
- The Apology of Socrates*. Plato. Ed. by E. H. Blakeney. Scholartis Press.
30s.
- Studies in Literature*. III. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. Cambridge Press.
10s. 6d.
- A Literary History of the Arabs*. R. A. Nicholson. Cambridge Press.
Abt. 12s.
- Elizabethan and Other Essays*. The late Sir Sidney Lee. Oxford Press.
18s.
- Prefaces to Shakespeare*. Second Series: 'Antony and Cleopatra'; 'Romeo
and Juliet'; 'Merchant of Venice'; 'Cymbeline'. H. Granville-
Barker. Sidgwick & Jackson. 9s. The first series of Prefaces being
the work of a dramatist, scholar, and producer, were of excep-
tional value.
- Malory*. E. Vinaver. Oxford Press. 15s.
- Marlowe and His Circle*. Frederick S. Boas. Oxford Press. 7s. 6d.
- Tradition and Experiment in Modern English Literature*. Lectures by
T. S. Eliot, Edmund Blunden, Rebecca West, and others. Milford.
8s. 6d.
- The Donne Tradition*. G. Williamson. Milford.
- Short Studies in Shakespeare*. G. F. Bradley. Murray. 6s. Remarkable for
their common sense and originality. The essay on *Hamlet* has
already made some stir in critical circles.
- The Victorian Romantics*. T. Earle Welby. Howe. £1 5s. Well docu-
mented, trustworthy, and suggestive.
- Back Numbers*. 'Stet' (T. Earle Welby). Constable. 10s. Unduly and
temporarily neglected authors.
- The Legion Book*. Ed. by Captain Cotton Minchin. Cassell. £1 1s.
A miscellany of prose, verse, and illustration of exceptional merit.
- Dream of the Red Chamber*. Tsao Hsueh-Chin and Kao Ngoh.
Routledge. 10s. 6d.
- A Game at Chesse*. Thomas Middleton. Ed. R. C. Bald. Cambridge
Press. 12s. 6d. A very curious piece of Jacobean political satire,
admirably edited.

Cornered Poets. Lawrence Housman. *Cape.* 7s. 6d. Dramatic sketches of poets in queer situations.

The Sense of Glory. Herbert Read. *Cambridge Press.* 10s. 6d.

DRAMA

The Works of Christopher Marlowe. Ed. by Prof. R. H. Case. 7 vols. *Methuen.* 8s. 6d. It is strange that we should have had to wait so long for a sound text of Marlowe.

The Russian Theatre. Joseph Gregor and René Fülöp-Miller. *Harrap.* £5 5s.

Life of Eleonora Duse. E. A. Rheinhardt. *Secker.* 18s.

A Production, 1927. Gordon Craig. *Milford.* £4 4s.

The Romantic Young Lady. Gregorio Martinez Sierra. English Version by Helen and Harley Granville-Barker. *Sidgwick & Jackson.* 3s. 6d.

FICTION

Complete Works of Virginia Woolf. *Hogarth Press.* 5s. per vol.

The Revolt of the Fishermen. Anna Seghers. Translated by Margaret Goldsmith. *Elkin Matthews.* 6s. (Kleist Prize, 1928.)

Himself and Mr. Raikes. W. B. Maxwell. *Hutchinson.* 7s. 6d.

The Conquerors. André Malraux. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

The Near and the Far. L. H. Myers (author of *The Orissors*). *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

Hans Frost. Hugh Walpole. *Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.

The Hawbucks. John Masefield. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.

Vile Bodies. Evelyn Waugh. *Chapman & Hall.* 7s. 6d.

The Captive. Marcel Proust. Trans. C. K. Scott-Moncrieff. *Knopf.* 15s.

The Hoax. Italo Svevo. *Hogarth Press.* Abt. 6s.

Zeno. Italo Svevo. Translated by Beryl de Zoete. *Putnam.* 7s. 6d. Svevo, who was killed in a motor accident a few years ago, is a curious and original writer with marked affinities with post-Proust fiction.

Early Sorrow. Thomas Mann. *Secker.* 5s.

In a Glass Darkly. J. Sheridan le Fanu. Illustrations by Edward Ardizzone. *Peter Davies.* 12s. 6d.

The Patriot. Alfred Neumann. *Peter Davies.* 3s. 6d.

ABOUT A HUNDRED NEW BOOKS 471

Novels of Captain Marryat. 22 vols. *Dent.* 3s. 6d. (5 vols. out.) This is a most welcome reprint.

Death of My Aunt. C. H. Kitchen. *Hogarth.* 7s. 6d. Admirable and original murder story.

The Mercury Story Book. *Longman.* 7s. 6d.

High Wind in Jamaica. Richard Hughes. *Chatto & Windus.* 7s. 6d.

The Dark Journey. Julian Green. *Heinemann.* 7s. 6d.

HISTORY

German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914. Selected by E. T. S. Dugdale. Preface by Sir Charles Eliot. Vol. II: From Bismarck's Fall to 1898. *Methuen.* 21s.

The Jesuits. René Fülöp-Miller. *Putnam.* 21s. The author's name is well known for his study of Lenin.

Life in the Middle Ages. Ed. by G. G. Coulton. *Cambridge Press.* Abt. 8s. 6d. Always good reading.

The Tactics and Strategy of the Great Duke of Marlborough. Hilaire Belloc. *Arrowsmith.* 21s. This is the first complete survey of the Duke as a soldier.

The Old Regime in France. F. Funck-Brentano. *Arnold.* 16s.

Studies in Medieval Culture. Prof. C. H. Haskins. *Oxford Press.* 18s.

The Trial of Lady Ivie. Sir John Charles Fox. *Oxford Press.* 7s. 6d.
Sir John Fox's competence as a narrator of mysteries is well known.

The World Crisis, 1914-18. Elie Halévy. *Oxford Press.* 7s. 6d.

The Trial of Count Konigsmark. Ed. by Eveline Godley. *Peter Davies.* 7s. 6d. An exciting and mysterious incident recounted by a recognized authority on the period.

The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist. Robert Eisler. *Methuen.* 42s.
The new Josephus, the discovery of which caused some excitement years ago, is at last made available for the general reader.

Three Studies in European Conservatism. Metternich; Guizot; The Catholic Church. E. L. Woodward. *Constable.* 15s.

JUVENILE

The Omnibus Jules Verne. *Gollancz.* 8s. 6d. Five of the best stories in one volume.

The Pirate Twins. William Nicholson. *Faber & Faber.* 3s. 6d.

Silver Magic. A Selection of Fairy Tales. Ed. by Romer Wilson. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

MISCELLANEOUS

English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases. G. L. Apperson. Dent. 31s. 6d.; and

A Glossary of Colloquial and Popular French. L. E. Kastner and J. Marks. Dent. 12s. 6d. Both very useful.

Crime and the Man. R. Ellis Roberts. Arrowsmith. 10s. 6d.

Dudley and Gilderoy. Algernon Blackwood. Benn. 8s. 6d.

The Great Pearl Robbery. C. Humphreys. Heinemann. 12s. 6d. A fine story of detection which is as exciting as the best detective fiction.

PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

Christian Ethics and Modern Problems. Dean Inge. Hodder & Stoughton. 12s. 6d.

A History of Science and its Relations with Philosophy and Religion. W. C. D. Dampier-Whetham. Cambridge Press. 18s.

Process and Reality. A. N. Whitehead. Cambridge Press. About 18s.

The Universe Around Us. Sir James Jeans. Cambridge Press. 12s. 6d. A most remarkable exposition of the latest astronomical theories and discoveries.

Addresses Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1929, in South Africa. King. 6s.

POETRY

Ambition and Other Poems. W. H. Davies. Cape. 3s. 6d.

The Testament of Beauty. Robert Bridges. Oxford Press. 7s. 6d. and £2 2s.

A Vision of the Mermaids. Gerard Manley Hopkins. Milford. 6s.

Catullus: The Complete Latin Text with a Life. Translation by F. C. W. Hiley. Peter Davies. Abt. £2 2s.

Selected Poems: Lyrical and Narrative. W. B. Yeats. Macmillan. 7s. 6d.

Driven. Leroy Macleod. Knopf. 6s.

Love's Progress or The Education of Araminta. James Laver. The Nonesuch Press. 4s. 6d. Not quite so good as *A Stitch in Time*, but very witty.

Poems, 1886-1929. Rudyard Kipling. Special edition 500 signed copies. 3 vols. Macmillan. £15 15s.

READERS' REPORTS

THE DREAM AND THE BUSINESS

The problem of crimes in real life *versus* fictional crimes is one of perennial interest. Does the same public that likes the detective novel like also the equally endless (though more expensive) stream of *Famous Poisoners*, *Sixteen Bad Men*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, *Wife and Child Murderers*, etc., which are remaindered at three-and-sixpence in Boots's second-hand list? And, furthermore, do those who like these works really like reading the same story about the same criminal over and over again? The last is a really perplexing point. I am not a 'fan' for this sort of literature; yet of the twenty-three cases chronicled by Canon Hannay (*Murder Most Foul*, by George A. Birmingham. Heinemann. 8s. 6d.) there are only six which are new to me, and only three of the twelve given by Mr. MacNalty (*A Book of Crimes*, by A. S. MacNalty. Elkin Matthews & Marrot. 12s. 6d.); and four of the cases appear in both volumes. Anybody who makes a real study of crime books must, I should imagine, have read them all before. Why should he want to read them all over again?

It cannot be adduced that every new treatment—within the length, be it noted, of the average short story—throws new light on the case which it is describing. This may be true in the case of certain celebrated mysteries, like the death of Charles Bravo; and it is true of one of the cases mentioned in these two books, the trial of Madeline Smith, where Canon Hannay and Mr. MacNalty come to diametrically opposite conclusions about Madeline's guilt. This is interesting, though not, I think, so interesting as the sections of *The Ring and the*

Book, which are called, respectively, 'Half-Rome' and 'The Other Half-Rome'; but it is true of only a very few cases. There is no room, for example, for divergent views about William Palmer of Rugeley; at least, I never met any one who considered him a much-injured man. There is even less disagreement, and very little interest, in the sordid exploits of the lunatic Neill Cream; yet the stories of Cream and Palmer are continually appearing in one collection after another. 'For the thrill,' says Canon Hannay in his introduction. But can the thrill really be indefinitely repeated? If that is so, weary detective novelists may lift up their hearts, for they have only to rewrite a few of their novels as short stories and sell a volume of them at fifteen shillings a time.

That apart, there is a good deal of interest for the reader of detective novels in these two books, particularly Canon Hannay's. In the first place, as everybody knows, crimes in real life do not 'work out' nicely according to the canons of detective fiction. In all the thirty-five cases, there are only five in which the plot would be considered really good by a critic, in that the police started with an unknown murderer, found him by clues and by information, caught him, and *succeeded in getting him convicted*. These five unfortunates, who may be regarded as martyrs to the interest of the plot, are Courvoisier (though he provided a ridiculously short run), Kate Webster, Müller, Dickman, and that incredible bungler Professor Webster. In several cases, such as those of Burke and Hare, Thurtell, and Eugene Aram, the police could only hang one murderer by allowing another to confess, which any detective writer would think a miserable way out; in others, such as that of the blood-thirsty Captain Goodeve, the criminal was plain from the start of the story, and

the only difficulty was to get the 'goods' on him. Constance Kent confessed, long after any danger to her from police activity was passed; Arnold Walder was never caught; Lamson the poisoner put up a false trail which Mr. Crofts, for example, would have had to disprove at great length before allowing his criminal to be caught—but the police, not playing fair, merely said that he must obviously have got the poison into his victim somehow, and the jury agreed. Again, more than once the police brought what appears to be the murderer to trial, only to see him get off; though, in compensation, they were allowed to hang suspects like poor Eliza Fenning and the suspicious Captain Donnellan, when they had quite clearly not proved their case at all. Real life outrages the puzzle conventions which detective novels have so laboriously built up.

It goes farther; it outrages the conventions of probability. Herein, I think, lies a great part of the attraction of Real Crime. Detective novels, on the whole, tend to get tamer and tamer, fearing the loud wrath of their readers if they introduce outrageous incidents. But life has no such scruples. The story of Arnold Walder, for example, of his escapes and the way in which he continually sent notes to the police to say where he was and what he was going to do next, is simply howling farce; the Peltzers, on any supposition, behaved as if they had been reading bad Gaboriau and had decided to go one better. And as to Adelaide Bartlett and her triangle, the amiable parson who taught her Greek and ran away when the storm began, and the husband who wrote enthusiastic letters to the parson urging him on, and when he was ill required her to hold his toe day and night for three weeks—what is an intelligent critic to make of that?

Canon Hannay's book is much the better of these two. It gives enormous reading-value for the money; it really makes the reader interested in the stories and characters of its criminals (in so far as the latter can be made interesting, which is not invariably the case), and, best of all, it is well and readably written. In far too many volumes of 'real life' the style appears to be based on that of the worst class of scandalous biography, pretentious and barely grammatical.

Miss Frances Noyes Hart's new book, *Hide in the Dark* (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.), is a very good contrast to the real life volumes. Readers of *The Bellamy Trial* do not need to be told that Miss Hart knows how to be exciting, and the first thing to say about her new book is that it is breathlessly exciting from beginning to end. *The Bellamy Trial* was made into a play, and ran for a long time in London as *The Trial of Mary Dugan*; this new book is crying out to be made into a play, and will probably, if theatre managers know what they are about, appear on the boards within a few months. Secondly, it is no small achievement to have packed thirteen characters, all of approximately the same class and social training, into the walls of one house, and to have differentiated them all so clearly. It is really done with enormous skill; the little duologues and triologues which the characters have with each other are admirably calculated to disclose both the minds of the speakers and exactly so much of the antecedent facts as the author requires at the moment; and the actual dialogue, the 'cut-and-thrust', is in general beautifully managed, if a little overstrained in parts. Certainly Miss Hart is a craftsman of the first order. But lay her book against any one of the tales told by Canon Hannay, and its essential theatricality becomes instantly

obvious. The situation, the crimes, the motives, and the emotions are all of the theatre; and while real life might, as we have seen, provide one of these items in full theatrical measure, it is exceedingly unlikely to provide them all. For the most part, this is not in the least a criticism of the book; it is a novel, a theatrical novel, and we should not complain because it behaves as such. There are two points, however, on which I feel criticism is called for, points on which theatricality has gone so far as to outrage, not real life, but that sense of probability which is always waiting in intelligent readers to pounce on the novelist. The incident of the girl whom all men loved, and who died brutally betrayed, with her face 'all destroyed with crying', is really a little too sentimentally sticky to be endured. Her name is *Sunny*—a terrible name—and as a character she comes straight out of Gene Stratton Porter. She 'stickifies' the novel whenever her ghost appears. Secondly, the 'murderer' is really too unpleasant. From his very entrance he is quite clearly labelled villain, and, as the story develops, we see that at any rate half the assembled company has excellent reason for doing away with him. But, if that were so, would they really have remained his boon-companions, and asked him to join them in a joyful Hallowe'en party? Perhaps in America they would; but it strikes an English reader as unlikely. Finally, the whole emotional atmosphere is just a little overstrained; but the book is certainly a remarkable achievement.

The three books which come from Messrs. Methuen are presumably the 'left-overs' from their recent detective novel competition, and, like the prizewinners, indicate that Messrs. Methuen's judges cared more for style than for plot. All the three are well written; not one has a

good plot. The best is *Murder at the Keyhole*, by R. A. J. Walling, which is a pleasant story, swift-moving and with a spice of shocker. Surely, however, the doctor could have told from the corpse at least whether the shot was fired from inside or outside the room—which doubt makes, unfortunately, a large part of the story. *The Mystery of the Papyrus*, by G. B. Vale, starts amusingly but tails off. The Americans are very stage Americans, and the story, when it gets to the Mexican city, drags intolerably. I will freely confess that I did not guess the explanation of the papyrus; but that was because it was so obvious that I could not imagine even the stupidest of stage policemen not having tried it at the start. The despairing detective is, however, a pleasant idea. *The Murder of an Old Man*, by David Frome, is the least good of the three: the business of the three wills is dreadfully confusing to follow, and the characters not distinct enough to give any help. However, it is not too bad.

The rest of the autumn season's bag—a portentous collection—must be reserved until next month.

Les Enfants Terribles, by Jean Cocteau. (Grasset. 12 fr.) Inseparable in most English minds from the idea of the foreign schoolboy, there is an atmosphere of slight moral discomfort; a reminiscence of rather chubby calves and thighs unduly set off by rather abbreviated garments, of considerable worldly wisdom accentuated by considerable outward juvenility. Thus the novelist, who describes them, seems to be dealing in the world of angels; his characters move half-way between the world of men and the twilight existence of animals and children. We cannot tell at which point they may suddenly set foot upon the adult plane, and blossom forth into complete humanity.

Qualms such as these will overtake the reader while he pursues his tortuous path through M. Jean Cocteau's new novel, groping gingerly from page to page and horribly uncertain what he is likely to tread on in the darkness. 'Incest underfoot!' the reviewer warned himself before he had gone very far; but it is pleasant to be able to reassure the British reader that this suspicion remained unjustified. It is there, so to speak, but prefers to keep discreetly out of view; not that it is the less disturbing for that, just as the mouse, which one does not see but hears rustling, has a worse effect upon the nerves than a mouse which runs boldly into the middle of the carpet.

Tragedy, arriving in the nick of time, tucks up brother and sister each in its separate sepulchral bed: 'où les chairs se dissolvent, où les âmes s'épousent, où l'inceste ne rode plus'. Very different, you notice, is the tenor of M. Cocteau's new book from that of his previous novels, from *Le Grand Écart*, say. It is more lyrical, more diffuse, more ambitious in intention and, in effect, less satisfactory. *Le Grand Écart* was a novel of youthful disillusionment, the epitome and parody of many earlier novels, an interminable series which begins with *l'Education Sentimentale*. It was representative of M. Cocteau at his best and at his worst; of M. Cocteau, the trick-bicyclist:

Un somptueux tir de foire, en miettes, c'est Venise le jour. La nuit, elle est une negresse amoureuse, morte au bain avec ses bijoux de pacotille.

and of M. Cocteau, the intrepid steeple-chaser. The manner of the relation was neat and light-handed as nowadays very few novels are. It contained several

inimitable caricatures, notably the figure of Stopwell, the hypocritical English undergraduate:

Peter Stopwell eût possédé la beauté grecque si le saut en longueur ne l'avait étiré comme une photographie mal prise. Il sortait d'Oxford. Il en tenait sa fatuité, ses boîtes de cigarettes, son cache-nez bleu marine et une immoralité multiforme sous l'uniforme sportif.

Critics, no doubt, who were inclined to decry *Le Grand Écart*, as being merely 'amusing', may complain of *Les Enfants Terribles* that it is not amusing enough. Here the novelist's entire attention is focussed upon the indefinable yet indissoluble bond which connects a brother to his sister. They live alone, and the untidy bedroom-living-room, in which their life passes, becomes the theatre of their emotional development. *Le Chambre* and its associations acquire an almost mystical value. Presently other characters are admitted to share its spell—with results naturally fatal. Indeed, it is the book's chief weakness that M. Cocteau, having contrived to extract a sort of savage poetry from the situation of brother and sister living, sleeping, even taking their baths in common, from an understanding which, close and affectionate as it is, depends not on endearments but on a constant interchange of the most appalling insults and ingenious tortures, should attempt to prolong the spell over their latter history. The interaction of Paul and Elisabeth, as spontaneous and as ferocious at first as the games of a pair of young leopard-cubs, turns to the solemnest kind of farce when both are grown-up and both married. The inevitable incompleteness of the relationship should have been its real beauty. We should have liked to watch

this marvellous and unrepeatable friendship gradually growing feebler, their understanding gradually dropping to pieces. But espousals beyond the grave! Still, there is an odd fascination about M. Cocteau's little book; the narrative is exquisitely handled; there is a freshness of language and a strangeness and tenderness of feeling which must recommend it to all discriminating critics.

Among recent English novels, one of the more remarkable is Mr. Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero*. (Chatto. 8s. 6d.) A voluminous book, it contains the substance of two novels of unequal length and merit. The earlier and longer portion, which describes the hero's childhood, adolescence, youth, and love-adventures in pre-War London, is bad, argumentative, noisy; the novelist harangues, abuses, expostulates. The second part, which might well be bodily excerpted, is in itself one of the best English war-novels which have yet appeared. It is as sparing of comment and as sustained in emotion as the chapters which precede it are exasperatingly diffuse and uneven. It displays the same kind of pitiful human dignity under suffering that emerges from Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Another novel, which deserves to be bought as well as read, is Liam O'Flaherty's *The House of Gold*. (Cape. 7s. 6d.) This is the story of an Irish profiteer and of his destruction by an unfaithful wife, described in terms of almost mythological grandeur: a method which suits Mr. O'Flaherty's beautiful clear-cut prose, but, as a means of portraying human character, has many and obvious disadvantages. For what Mr. O'Flaherty's characters gain in scale, they also lose in density and

substance. Thus, although three-quarters of the book is exciting and memorable, in the end its interest declines.

An enjoyable and readable novel is Mr. Brett Young's *Black Roses* (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.), a tale of Naples during the cholera epidemic, but of which I found the accessory detail—his picture of the hill-country above Sorrento, of the Neapolitan *fondaci* and tenements—more moving than the drama itself. It is in Mr. Brett Young's best vein; whereas Miss Rebecca West's rather vapourish little expedition into the realms of fantasy, *Harriet Hume* (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.), has made me regret the ponderous but respectable feminism of her earlier novels. P. Q.

Representative Women, that admirable series of biographical portraits, edited by Mr. Francis Birrell (Gerald Howe. 3s. 6d. each), appears to be drawing to a close. Its object, the editor announced in an introductory note, was to provide 'the adorable adepts of our night-clubs' with 'a standard up to which they should at any rate attempt to live'. Though the adorable adepts, except a few irremediably stupid or insensitive, have no doubt enjoyed the perusal of these gracefully-written little volumes, I wonder if they have found themselves somewhat at a loss for the implied standard? Ranging from Anna Comnena and Bianca Cappello to Mrs. Annie Besant, the sitters could scarcely have been more diverse; yet their portraits are curiously alike in so far as they all wear a look of puzzled, but energetic, aimlessness. What was the object which cost them, in their different walks, so much pain, so much perturbation, so much eventual misery? Was it always what they pretended? Why was it that everything which

they accomplished seems to have been the result rather of accident than of any real design?

Take, for example, the editor's own volume, a concise and brilliantly lucid study of the famous Duchesse du Maine. Even Mr. Birrell himself, notoriously the kindest of men, is pitiless in his condemnation of this poor dwarfish little schemer to whose intrigues only the accident of her birth and marriage could have lent the slightest importance. Grand-daughter of the Great Condé and wife of Louis XIV's bastard son by Madame de Montespan, Louis Auguste Duc du Maine, Madame de Maintenon's favourite foster-child, she blundered into the middle of a complicated dynastic plot (at a time when it was still uncertain whether Louis XV, a sickly child-king, would survive), patching together on her own account a vast ramshackle conspiracy which aimed at deposing the Regent and hoisting her recalcitrant and timid husband into his vacant place. Incredibly ill-managed, the plot failed, as, of course, it was bound to do. Cardinal Dubois, the Regent's clever and unscrupulous minister, saw to that. He watched, encouraged, then stretched out a hand and adroitly brought it tumbling to the ground. Like Anna Comnena, as a conspirator Mme. du Maine had failed; and, while her unfortunate partisans were being executed in the provinces, she was hustled off to endure a spell of not uncomfortable imprisonment. Having thus tried her luck at politics, she reverted to amateur theatricals and extempore versifying. She was a remarkable woman but, one must hope, not especially representative—business-like without being purposeful, frivolous without any of the more agreeable traits which accompany self-indulgence.

Next, Christina of Sweden. This portrait, with the

editor's Duchesse du Maine and Mr. Clifford Bax's Bianca Cappello, deserves to head the list. Mrs. Harrison is obliged to confess herself thoroughly mystified by the *wherefore* of many of her heroine's most important actions. Why, for instance, allow oneself to be fleeced and swindled by a collection of villainous hangers-on, then suddenly turn against a single member of the group, apparently no more villainous than the rest, and order his instant execution? A Christian queen and patron of learning and the arts; why proceed to carry out one's threat under circumstances of the most hair-raising barbarity, slaughtering one's dishonest servant in the palace of a friendly monarch? Christina was all inconsistencies, but they were not the fruitful inconsistencies of a man of genius. She had made the unparalleled gesture of renouncing throne and faith, on purpose that she might be received into the Catholic Church—or so she would have had it thought. But, though ostentatiously a good Catholic, she was also the most troublesome and rebellious subject from whom a diplomatic Pope has ever suffered. She was rabidly unconventional, but she was also a tremendous stickler for precedence. Profoundly cultured, it is difficult to believe that she had really digested any of the subjects in which she pretended to be absorbed. She was intellectual but hardly intelligent. Her correspondence blackened thousands of reams of good paper; the exuberance of her spirit knew no bounds. Yet, as told by Mrs. Harrison, her long and intricate life passes like a nightmare; it has left behind no trace except a tangled crop of anecdotes and scandals.

And what of Lady Hester Stanhope, the prototype and patron saint of every eccentric English old maid who has raised a smile and shrug upon the other side of the Channel? She was magnificent in her waywardness.

Beyond that, there is almost nothing that can be said. Mr. Martin Armstrong has made her vagaries the subject of ninety pages of moving narrative, ending on a hollow note of futility and failure. Or take a modern example: Mrs. Annie Besant, whose saga, with imperceptible irony, is related by Mr. Geoffrey West, the story of a wild adventurous course which from Pusey climbs to Bradlaugh, traverses the stony upland ground of early Fabianism, and, swooping madly downhill into the gloomy vale of Blavatsky, ends in her tragi-comic adoption of a Hindu Messiah. Mrs. Besant has never lacked convictions, but, by the light of her conclusion we may come to think sympathetically rather than with reverence of the unselfish energy which she has spent in reaching it. And so on through the entire series. Well written and well edited, these little books are also cheap yet handsome. They will give a great deal of pleasure, and it is gratifying to reflect, while enjoying them, that the night-life of the capital will probably continue unimpaired.

The September Massacres, by G. Lenotre (Hutchinson. 21s.).

As a source-book for the history of the massacres this could not be bettered. Of the ten accounts extracted, only one will be new to most students of the Revolution—An Old Man's Memoirs (published in 1842 as *Souvenirs d'un Viellard*); the others have long been well known.

All were written by eye-witnesses, eight of them all but victims of these dreadful happenings. Their value, of course, varies, according as the authors wrote soon or long after the events which they describe, had enemies to attack or interests to defend. Mehée (writing after Thermidor) had his skin to save; he had been secretary to the committee of the Commune. Maton, writing in 1795, was



resolved to blacken the memory of Marat. Weber, who published in London 1804-9, overestimated his own importance and saw the hand of Robespierre in everything.

These are preoccupations which may affect the writers' estimates of motives, and may point their denunciations or apologies. They cannot touch the value of the evidence which they report.

Without pretension to literary skill, here are set down some of the horrors amid which more than sixteen hundred prisoners were killed like so much pork. Fire-arms were not used; the sufferers were clubbed or cut to death. The murderers—several of them butchers by trade—were paid double for their labour because it was hard. 'M. Lenotre's' fragments give an authentic glimpse into the slaughter-house. The translation is adequate: there are some good illustrations and three excellent plans.

'M. Lenotre' has added some scholarly notes and prints a number of hitherto unpublished police reports. Charges against some of the alleged murderers are given here, along with their denials. It is remarkable that only three of those accused were condemned in 1795.

Last, and most valuable to the historian, are three papers relating to that sinister figure, Stanislas Maillard. The first—a letter to the *Gazette française* of 20 Germinal, An. IV—pays unexpected tribute to Maillard's tribunal at the Abbaye; the writer owed it his life. The last two are justifications which Maillard wrote from his prison in 1793-4. Their tone is remarkable: 'I have been the defender of the innocent, and have never dishonoured myself by any atrocity. . . . As you read this defence, Fabre d'Eglantine, you will blush with shame for having attacked Maillard without knowing him. You would

George Allen & Unwin Ltd
40 Museum Street, London, W.C.1

OBLOMOV

By **IVAN GONCHAROV**. An entirely new and complete translation by Natalie Duddington of this great Russian novel. *10s. 6d. net*

MARRIAGE AND MORALS

By **BERTRAND RUSSELL**. A sincere and uncompromisingly frank survey of very controversial matters; probably the most provocative book Mr. Russell has ever written. *7s. 6d. net*

*Our Autumn Announcements List is just out.
May we send you a copy?*

Votaries of good living praise

DE RESZKE

The Aristocrat of Cigarettes

American - 25 for 1/10
American de Luxe 25 for 2/-
De Reszke *Virginias* 20 for 1/-

Tenor (Turkish) 25 for 3/2
Egyptian Blend 20 for 2/-
De Reszke *Turks* 20 for 1/-

J. MILLHOFF & CO. LTD., 86 PICCADILLY, W.1

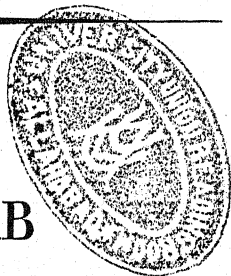
blush still more if you chose to remember that he was one of the conquerors of the Bastille; that on the days of 5th and 6th October he was at the head of those courageous women who at that critical moment struck the boldest blow at the tyranny; that on 10th August 1792, that ever memorable day, he saved the patriots from becoming the victims of the fearful plots which were being hatched at the château of the Tuileries; that on the 31st May and 1st and 2nd June, and in all the holy insurrections made for the good of the people and the establishment of liberty and equality, Maillard was always seen at his post.' This is a fanatic, not a hired assassin. Unlike the brutes whose answers in 1795 are a monotonous series of denials, Maillard was ashamed of naught. He is the type of the revolutionary disciple. He had believed in every 'aristocratic plot'; on every great day he had acted with convinced 'patriotism'; he had nothing to hide or to defend. This invalid who had given his life for the Revolution, who was in the thirties when he died spitting blood, belongs to the same class as Marat. Without attempting to understand him and his life, we cannot understand the Revolution.

Finale of Seem, by Walter Lowenfels (Heinemann. 3s. 6d.). Mr. Humbert Wolfe talks of 'other poets, beautiful and indistinct, leaning over this poet's shoulder'. They are not always so indistinct. Mr. Lowenfels halts between two orthodoxies: the one classical, the other derived from T. S. Eliot. His classical manner is full of echoes, his modernity humorous and prosaic; and even where he takes some pains to be unintelligible, lucidity is always breaking in. The poem is rather agreeable in both veins.

LIFE AND LETTERS

R. C. TREVELYAN

WILLOW-HERB



HE: Here in the shade, by warm winds fanned deliciously,

Gazing upward into dark yew-tree boughs, bright-eyed

With scarlet berries, and beyond through depth on depth

Of beech-leaves filled with wavering green and golden light,

Is it not good to think of nothing, to lie still

And quite forget so many many tiresome things,

Opinions, theories, all the scum and dross of books?

SHE: Look how those light-winged silvery seeds float swiftly by

In endless stream! . . . at every pause and shift of wind

Hovering, twirling, settling, and then on once more!

Where do they come from? Are they thistledown?—

Oh see!

There's one caught in mid-flight and held invisibly

By a spider's thread!—Now it breaks free, and away it sails!

HE: It's from the purple willow-herb they come. These
woods

Are full of them. All summer long the flowers fall,
And then the ripening pods burst open and let fly
Their close-packed seeds, that one by one, like new-
born moths,

Unfolding in the sun their silky wings
Invite the winds to blow them where they will.

SHE: Are there not myriads of them? Yet next year
There will be no more willow-herb than now.

HE: Aye, few, scarce one in a thousand, find a soil
Wherein they can strike root and thrive.

SHE: So then
The rest are wasted—wasted like our idle thoughts,
That from our minds into the void stream cease-
lessly,

To be lost there and perish without offspring.

HE: Yet of our thoughts how few deserve to breed!

SHE: I know not that. My thoughts are not like those poor
seeds,

Each one the other's image, pregnant with the same
Unvarying hope: plant, flower and seed unendingly;
But all have a life and beauty of their own;
And could they but find soil in other minds, what
new

Marvellous children might they not there beget!

HE: Yet should they chance to breed in alien soil,
'Tis like enough you would disown their offspring.

SHE: But unless thought engenders thought elsewhere,
It perishes, having lived in vain.

HE: Why so? Your thoughts,
If they had beauty, were not vain for you.

Within our minds, where they are known and
loved,

There only let them breed—incestuously.

SHE: Do you not love me for my thoughts?

HE: How can I?

Since how may I know them? It is your words alone
I know,

Those vague deceptive shadows of your thoughts—
Not shadows even, but clumsy ill-fitted masks, de-
vised

By men long dead, behind which you conceal your
own.

SHE: Then for what do you love me?

HE: Listen! There is a blackbird,
High overhead among the beech-leaves! How he
sings!

His thoughtless rapture puts our dull crude words to
shame.

Listen!

SHE: I never hear his song, but it awakes
Some half-forgotten mood of childhood happiness,
Before my senses had become the slaves of thought.
What does he sing of?—Not of love.—And yet why
not?

Is love aught else than a blind folly, a causeless joy?

ANGÈLE BARTLETT

SOLANGE

She was a ward of the Assistance Publique; which meant that no one belonged to her, and that she belonged to no one. She knew nothing whatever concerning her parents or the circumstances of her birth, and she had no real desire to know. There was not a trace of curiosity about her, and very little imagination. She accepted all the facts of her life without questioning, as a matter of course.

She knew nothing about herself but what she could remember; and her early childhood was devoid of landmarks. By the age of six she was in the care of an old peasant woman, a widow, who supplemented the modest income derived from two fields, a few rabbits and chickens, and a cow, with the miserly allowance that the Assistance Publique gave her for Solange. This woman could hardly be expected to love such a completely unattractive child: thin and very undersized, with small expressionless eyes, and wisps of nondescript hair. But Solange was quiet and always obedient; she was useful; she led the cow out daily to pasture along grassy lanes. Her foster-mother did not pet her, but she was not unkind: she did not scold her more than the women of her class usually scold their own children. Solange was not unhappy: but her small features were already fixed in an expression of premature old age.

The house where they lived was isolated, and she had no playmates. For a year or two, she attended the village school with fair regularity. Her constant effort to grasp the teacher's meaning seemed to scatter away her limited

power of understanding. With such an unpromising pupil the teacher was not very strict on the question of attendance; and as the help of Solange was often required by her foster-mother, she got into the way of missing school more and more frequently. When she left it definitely at the age of thirteen, she could read, spelling out syllable by syllable in one string of meaningless sounds; she could write, with a simplified spelling of her own; she could also count up to about a hundred, and she could read the time of the clock. Such was to be, throughout her life, the sum of her intellectual knowledge.

At the age of fourteen she was sent into service with some farmers, the Roberts. For several weeks she was miserable with homesickness for the old woman, the cow, and all the old familiar surroundings. She had too little intelligence to adapt herself easily to any change in her life: it was long before she became sufficiently accustomed to the looks and manners of the people round her to grasp the meaning of the words addressed to her. Little notice was taken of her, and no one spoke to her much, except to order her about; and then she would always hasten to obey, in her eager and blind manner. She stood to everyone in the relation of a servant, and nothing else. She was vaguely conscious of the right to be fed and sheltered, and she would have resented blows or unfair treatment. But beyond this she had no claims. She never complained of the monotony of her hard-working days, unbroken by any rest, except the going to Mass on Sundays; but, after Mass, she had to hurry home to make up for lost time, even though she had had to rise so much earlier than on week-days. Yet Sunday morning Mass always gave her a pleasant feeling of excitement.

For, though she did not know it, deep within her were the needs and longings of every normal creature: the need for affection, the longing for pleasure. Sometimes, when she had passed the age of twenty, the stirring of those longings would make her moody; she did not know what was the matter with herself, and people scarcely noticed anything wrong with her; she would feel just a little restless and irritable; her answers would become more abrupt; her clumsiness increased, and she would be more apt to break things. The Roberts put up with those small lapses with fair good nature; they did not feel unkindly towards Solange: they knew her to be half-witted; they were also quite well aware that she could work hard and that they gave her nothing but a nominal wage. So they paid little attention to her occasional fits of ill-humour.

One evening the Roberts and their servants had gone to a fair in a neighbouring village. Solange alone remained in charge of the cattle and of the invalid grandmother. After supper she had to water the cows in the barn. As she was crossing the yard with her bucket, she saw a man coming towards her. He was a tall young fellow, known throughout the whole countryside as the Satyr, who used to give occasional help at the farm. He was drunk. He had just left the fair, where he had met the Roberts, and he knew that the house was deserted. The moving figure of Solange had arrested his attention as he passed by the gate. He tried to joke with her; but she was not inclined to listen to him. She tried to walk past him, but he put his arms out to stop her. She grew impatient and a little alarmed, and tried to get away from him. Then he closed his arms on her and carried her, like a small child, through the door of the barn. She had neither

the wit nor the power to struggle, though she sensed what was awaiting her.

When the Roberts came home, Solange was flushed and more nervously clumsy than usual; but everybody was too tired and too excited after the fair to notice anything wrong with her. The next day and the following days were as if nothing had happened. Now and again Solange would flush slightly when the recollection of that evening crossed her mind; but she accepted that fact as she accepted all the facts of her life, as things that simply happened, like sunshine and rain. As the daily routine of her life was not affected by it, neither was the balance of her mind. The idea of a possible pregnancy had not occurred to her yet.

But, as the months went by, she began to have vague fears. She became more often and more perceptibly irritable. Then one day Madame Robert happened to glance at her, and, with the instinct of a matron, she saw the whole truth in a flash. She questioned Solange, unblushingly and to the point; and Solange received from her the full confirmation of her fears. But the fact that she was to be a mother held little meaning for her yet; the child did not exist in her thoughts. She felt a little embarrassed at first at the thought that now everyone would know, and might stare at her, or make coarse jokes at her expense; she shrank from attracting so much attention to herself. But the Roberts were still kindly disposed towards her; they could not blame a half-witted girl for her misfortune: it was bound to happen sooner or later. They silenced those of their household who would have worried Solange with their pointed remarks and their obscene jokes. Solange was grateful to them and almost sank back

into her former placidity; nothing was outwardly altered in her life; she performed the same tasks, and with even more zeal than before, in spite of her growing discomfort: partly because of her gratitude to the Roberts, partly because of a dim sense that her pregnancy and her approaching confinement were depriving them of some of their dues, and that she had to make it up to them as far as she could.

Madame Robert had reserved a bed for Solange in the Maternity Hospital of the nearest town, and there she brought her about a month before the term of her pregnancy. At first, Solange felt quite lost in this changing herd of pregnant women. Every day a few of them would pass into the labour-ward, and new arrivals would fill up the beds left empty. They were all dressed alike in cheap grey flannel dressing-gowns, which made them look all equally shapeless and hideous. But Solange attracted special notice because of her small size—barely that of a child of twelve—which made her condition seem painfully abnormal. She looked as if she had just been weeping, or as if she had a perpetual headache. She moved nervously and dangerously quickly: she always just escaped breaking things or knocking herself against furniture and doors, as if she were shortsighted. When anyone spoke to her, she smiled nervously, became agitated, and could only murmur 'Oui, Madame', or 'Non, Madame' in answer to all questions. But when a small service was required of the expectant mothers, such as washing dishes or dusting the ward, she was always the first to come forward. As she grew accustomed to the place, she became quite happy; everybody felt sorry for her and was particularly kind: the other women treated her gently as a slightly deficient child; and the nurses

pitied her, for they knew that she was condemned to terrible suffering, as the size of her child, compared with that of her small frame, was too large to make a normal delivery possible.

. Her pains began one evening, and were soon agonizing. She bore them without a moan, but her eyes had the look of a small tortured animal. She tried very hard to do what she was told, until the doctor arrived, and she was chloroformed. When she came to herself again, she was aching in all her body, but the racking pains had stopped. The doctor had gone. Three nurses were quietly busy round her bed. One of them leaned over her and told her that she had a fine boy. She tried to smile, and felt comforted and happy.

The next morning, a nurse brought the baby to her, and left it a few seconds close to her, under her bed-clothes. She could not see it very well because she could scarcely turn her head towards it, and because he was so wrapped up in a shawl that only his head and his tiny hands were visible. Yet he seemed heavenly beautiful to her, a creature apart, a being so immensely above herself that her new-born love became a kind of veneration. She gave him the name of Henri, which was the most beautiful name that she could think of.

Her baby's cot was put close to her bed. She always lay with her face towards it; and when she became able to move one arm, she always rested her hand on its bar, and she would try to rock it gently when he cried.

The attentions she had received from the whole staff, and her pride in her boy, seemed to give her a little more self-confidence. She smiled less nervously, her eyes had lost their anxious look. She would be the first to greet the nurses with a shy 'Bonjour, Madame'. She would even

gather boldness enough to express her fears that her child was wet or hungry, or to call attention to his bed-clothes, which were not quite straight, or, perhaps, not quite clean.

She had not been allowed to feed her child at first, and her eyes looked hungry when he was taken from her to be fed, while she could see all around her the other mothers pressing their breasts to their babies' lips. When he was brought to her to be fed for the first time she turned quite white, and hastened, with fingers that nervousness made clumsy, to unbutton her nightgown. The child was unused to the breast and did not know how to suck; his mother was so anxious and fidgety that the first attempt had soon to be given up for the sake of both. A second attempt was more successful, and after the third or fourth, the care of making the child drink his full allowance was entrusted to Solange alone. She was greatly relieved not to have a nurse hanging over her bed at the only time when she could hold her child, press its little warm body against hers, and feel him all her own. She dreaded the coming of the nurse who would take him from her before he had owned himself completely satiated. He was one of those ravenous babies whose feeds have to be regulated strictly, according to the demands of modern nursing. But Solange was proud of his hunger, and longed to satisfy it. She was looking forward to taking him back to the farm, where she could care for him without interference. She felt proud at the thought of how everybody would admire him there, and say what a big, fine boy he was.

Her recovery was very slow. She was allowed to leave her bed on the sixteenth day, and then only for a few minutes, sitting in a chair. At last, by the end of another

week, she could once again walk about freely. She had then to be taught how to bath her son. The first time she was allowed to watch, but not to help. It was agony to her to see the hands of the nurse touching her child's naked body, turning it about with ease and efficiency, but without real gentleness and love. The next day she was allowed to do it herself, under the watchful eye of that same nurse, who was far too ready to pounce upon the least small act of forgetfulness or of clumsiness which would have made the lesson last longer. The awkwardness of Solange was increased by this impatient watchfulness, which she felt fixed upon her every movement, and she hurried with feverish haste in the fear that she might not be allowed to do it all herself. Her hands grasped the things they required with quick and jerky movements; but they touched the child with an almost exaggerated gentleness.

She had written to the Roberts to tell them that her child was born, as they had promised to come and see her then. But day after day passed, and they did not come; they did not even reply to her letter.

At last Madame Robert wrote, but it was to the Matron, to inform her that she and her husband would come and fetch Solange in two days (on market-day), and to ask her to break the news to Solange that they could not take the baby back as well. It was pure kindness on their part to take Solange back again; but they could really not be expected to take the child too, when Solange was barely worth her own keep. Of course, they could not turn her out, when she had no home to go to, and no chance of getting other work. It was very sad for her to have to give up her child to the Assistance Publique; but what could one do?

So the Matron called Solange into her room, and with a manner that tried to convey the impression that only the normal and expected was happening, she told her the terrible news. She added that they would keep Henri in the Hospital for another few weeks, in case Solange should find some better-paid work that would enable her to pay for his keep. Solange heard and understood the first few sentences, which told her plainly that she must give up her son. All the rest she understood vaguely to be the Matron's kind effort to hold out some hope to her; but she knew it to be worthless, and her heart could not take it.

She had received her death-blow, the death of the new life of love and joy just budding within her. She was stunned, yet aching in all her being. She felt bare and empty, with a clamouring void in her heart, so insistent, so harrowing, that her agony was almost physical.

The nurses could guess her distress; yet she was strangely silent and subdued; her eyes remained dry, but they seemed more deeply set and smaller, with no light in them. She remained for hours at a time sitting in a big armchair, in which she was lost like a child, motionless, with a fixed stare. All the women in the ward were full of pity for her, but their good-natured sympathy found no expression in front of that small silent figure. When the time for the babies' feeds came, Solange would fetch her own child quickly, with short hurried steps, nearly falling over on the polished floor. She would clutch him to her breast perhaps even more tightly than before; then, when she was sitting down again, she would remain passive, absolutely still, all the time that he was sucking.

The Roberts were to come and fetch her soon after dinner. A little before one, the midwife came to bind

Solange's breasts in a tight bandage, to stop the flow of their milk. Solange let herself be handled with a look of passive indifference, quite unconscious of the monstrous character of this act. Her grief was for herself alone: she wanted her child; she did not realize that he too would suffer, and be hungry for her.

The Roberts came very punctually, soon before two. They were in a great hurry, as they had to catch an early train and they did not want to pay for a cab to the station. They were both strong and prosperous-looking people.

They waited for Solange in the entrance-hall, and made no inquiries concerning the child: they did not wish to see it. When Solange appeared, Madame Robert bent down to kiss her, and quickly drew herself up again, saying: 'Well, Solange, I hear that you have a fine boy!' with kindly insensibility. Solange gave an imperceptible nod, and quickly turned round to shake hands with the man, who looked a little confused and said nothing to her.

While the Roberts were talking to the Matron, Solange went to fetch the parcel of her belongings, which she had left in the ward at the foot of her bed. Henri's cot was next to it, and he was asleep. Solange kissed him softly, without waking him. Then she hurried away.

In the long passage leading from the ward, a nurse, moved by such distress, opened her arms to Solange, and held her one second closely embraced, in a vain effort to comfort. Solange's body had a quick spasm, like a repressed sob. This expression of sympathy made her more conscious of her pain. Her friend realized it and let her go. Solange quickly joined the Roberts and followed them out.

The first evening she was asked a few questions con-

cerning the Hospital, the quality of the food—what the nurses were like. Then it was never mentioned again, and she never said a word about her son. About a week later she wrote to the Matron, a formal, ill-spelt letter that could hardly be deciphered, asking for a photograph of Henri. One of the nurses took it and it was sent to her.

Soon afterwards the Roberts warned her that the Matron would have to give up her son to the Assistance Publique if she could not provide for him. How could she provide for him? She never saw him and never heard of him again.

At thirty she looked so old that she remained as she was then to the end of her days; all the long remaining years could make no perceptible change in her.

MRS. CLEMENT PARSONS

BOSWELL'S TACT

Mr. Geoffrey Scott, whose recent untimely death in New York every lover of literature deploras, had only time to publish six of the projected sixteen or eighteen volumes of *Private Papers of James Boswell* in the limited first edition. Six further volumes were in the press at Mr. Scott's death, and the unfinished work will, of course, be carried on by other, though never abler, hands. The whole of the material is the property of Colonel Ralph Isham of Long Island, who acquired it from Boswell's great-great-grandson, Lord Talbot de Malahide.

We know Johnson in his great entirety from Boswell's *Life* of him, but the amazing creature that was Boswell is there only partially portrayed. In the instalments already published of the *Private Papers* and in another American publication, Boswell's *Letters*, admirably re-edited in 1924 by Professor Tinker, we meet the lesser immortal's independent self, not arduously sober, as when the companion of him he called 'stern Johnson', but Boswell in slippers, as frankly animal as Pepys, yet never losing hold of finer intentions.

However valuable the resultant three-dimensional Boswell may prove alike to psychologists and students of the eighteenth century when the *Private Papers* are completely accessible, the general reader will continue to regard Boswell as first and foremost the prince of interviewers and reporters.

In Boswell we observe that rare phenomenon, a gate-crasher who nine times out of ten got invited to stay

inside. Smiled on, he was apt to turn light-headed with excitement, but not to the point of finding himself dismissed. The question persists as to how this man—blatantly superficial, unheroic, without newspaper backing—succeeded, not only in originally forcing himself on the great, but in securing 'a wish for his return'. His position in The Club was a case in point. When, after a persistent canvass on his part, he was elected to that unique society, he so quickly got into 'good social plight' with the very members who had been least willing to admit him that it was for him Johnson coined the word, 'clubable'.

The time-honoured explanation is that wherever Boswell went his levity caused in others an agreeable sense of their own soundness, while his audacity, whether he understood a subject or not, created an atmosphere of ease. But there was more to it than that. All the considerable sensitiveness and finesse bestowed on him by nature he directed, with the concentration of which a narrow soul desperate for notice alone is capable, towards discriminating the traits and humouring the moods of each Somebody in turn on whom he, in Macaulay's phrase, fastened himself. Once introduced or self-introduced to a worthwhile personage, he proceeded to unfold such ecstasy of intelligent worship, such genius for extracting self-expression out of the interviewed, that in ten minutes the latter realized the presence of a balsamic elixir always desired, at last secured.

It was thus that during his gratifying push across Europe, 1763-6, Boswell edged his way into the rather more than less spectacular privacy of Rousseau at Môtiers. Certainly he had not to look far for someone from whom he might reasonably beg a 'recommenda-

tion'. Old Lord Keith, exiled in 1715, and, by Frederick the Great, made Governor of Neuchâtel, stood out as a heaven-sent intermediary. He was a brither Scot, he had protected Rousseau under the Emile persecution, Boswell had recently travelled three weeks in his company. Yet, in the event, Boswell framed his own self-description—a composition his journal styled 'really a Master-Piece'—and sent it to Rousseau's house, 'ordering the Maid to leave it, and say she'd return for the Answer'.

'I am an ancient Scots gentleman,' the ingratiating letter began. 'I am twenty-four. . . . To a man of your penetration into character a friend's letter of recommendation would be a superfluity. . . . Your writings have moved my heart, uplifted my soul, brightened my imagination.' He went on to implore Rousseau not to plead illness as a reason for refusing him admittance. He has 'much to tell'. He 'beseeches the advice of the author of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in a serious and delicate situation of his own.' After this last artful touch he 'awaits with impatience' Rousseau's response.

It was favourable, and Boswell and his 'enlightened Mentor' were presently sitting together, exchanging views on topics as disparate as Johnson ('I should love that man, I should respect him,' said Rousseau), polygamy, and Rousseau's cat, with plenty of acceptable reference on Boswell's part to Rousseau's works. Two or three weeks later, Boswell, quitting Switzerland to spread his conquests, left with Rousseau 'an outline' of his life, to be read in a sympathetic spirit and returned. 'In a little packet apart,' he enclosed, inviting comments, some fugitive pieces by his Utrecht charmer, the dashing *libre penseuse*, 'Zélide'.

Boswell hoped to entice Rousseau into prolonged cor-

respondence. Next to talking to eminent persons his fondest ambition was 'for epistolary intercourse with' them, the crowning evidence being his exquisitely impudent request to Chatham: 'Could your Lordship find time to honour me now and then with a letter?'

It was during the interview in 1764 above described that Rousseau fired Boswell with his own enthusiasm for the brave distressed Corsicans and promised an introduction to General Paoli. In Corsica, thereupon, Boswell spent five weeks of his European tour, a sojourn that 'made a man of' him, he said. The effect on him was 'as though the whole of Plutarch's lives had dissolved within' him. The book he published in 1768 on Corsica, the best seller of his own lifetime, was five times translated and Johnson pronounced the 'Journal' part of it 'in a very high degree curious and delightful'.

Of Boswell's successive heroes, Paoli, owing to dread of spies and assassins, was at first the most unyieldingly frigid. But what chance had Paoli against one who believed in his particular talent for finding the gold in people? 'Am I not fortunate in having something about me that interests people at first sight?' he reflected when an agreeable young widow in a stage-coach supported his foot on her knee. He had been troubled with ingrown toe nails.

After Rousseau, Voltaire. When Boswell called at Ferney he inquired whether the illustrious philosopher, then seventy, could give him 'any notion of the situation of our ideas which we have totally forgotten at the time, yet shall afterwards recollect'. In reply to this insidious inquiry Voltaire made one of the aptest quotations recorded in the annals of interviewing. He 'paused, meditated and acknowledged his ignorance in words

from Thomson's *Seasons*. "Aye," said he, "Where sleep the winds when 'tis calm?"' The rapture of Boswell may be imagined. Another superb entry for the journal, solely owing to his own inventive gambit.

And this wonderful man, inquisitive, not inquisitorial, using tact, never displaying it, was equally deft at diversion, revival and surprise. An instance of the last occurred when, on Johnson remarking that by seeing London he had seen 'as much of life as the world can shew', Boswell submitted: 'You have not seen Pekin', and thereby drew the stupendous rejoinder: 'What is Pekin? Ten thousand Londoners would *drive* all the people of Pekin: they would drive them like deer.'

The same tact characterized those further probings or after comments by which he cajoled his revered friend to better what was done.

'Pray, sir, is not Foote an infidel?'

'I do not know, sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel—that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject.'

'I suppose, sir, he has thought superficially, and seized the first notions which occurred to his mind.'

'Why, then, sir, still he is like a dog that snatches the piece next him.'

In starting a topic with Johnson, how well Boswell knew how to ground it on something certain to titillate! 'I talked to him of misery being "the doom of man" in this life, as displayed in his *Vanity of Human Wishes*. Yet I observed that things were done upon the supposition of happiness; grand houses were built, fine gardens made, etc.' At this dexterous compliment Johnson instantly expanded. 'Alas, sir, these are all only struggles for happiness,' he began. He talked on. At the first sign of

flagging Boswell 'suggested' (his own expressive word) that 'being in love . . . or having some favourite scheme for the next day, might prevent the wretchedness'. If Johnson was, as is stated, in a placid and benignant frame the rest of the evening, to whose wise handling was this not owing?

After Boswell had been to Eton to arrange his eldest son's entrance there, and the Head Master had entertained him 'at the Fellows' table', he wrote to Temple, the recipient of his more intimate confidences: 'I certainly have the art of making the most of what I have. How should one who has had only a Scotch education be quite at home at Eton? I had my classical quotations very ready.' Fortune usually favoured his boldness, and he made happy guesses, as on a wet morning in the Hebrides when Johnson took up a book, pointed to a paragraph and bade him discover the error in the text. He 'was lucky to hit on it at once'. 'Engines' was a misprint for 'enigmas'. "'Sir," said Johnson, "you are a good critic. This would have been a great thing to do in the text of an ancient author."'

Boswell approached Paoli with an introduction from the Sardinian consul at Leghorn. 'I never had such a trial as in the presence of Paoli,' he stated in his *Tour to Corsica*. 'For ten minutes we walked backwards and forwards, hardly saying a word, while he looked at me as if he searched my very soul.' This was disconcerting and, as Boswell felt, 'very severe upon' him, but difficulty is a challenge to courage. 'I ventured to address him with this compliment to the Corsicans, "Sir, I am upon my travels, and have lately visited Rome. I am come from seeing the ruins of one brave and free people. I now see the rise of another."' Beaconsfield in the

presence of his widowed sovereign could not have been more adroit. No wonder Paoli 'received my compliment very graciously'.

There came a day, years later, when Paoli, settled in London, gave, in Fanny Burney's hearing, his own account of this, his first dialogue with Boswell, the dialogue Gray unjustly stigmatized as 'between a green goose and a hero'.

'He came to my country,' said Paoli, 'and he fetched me some letter of recommending him; but I was of the belief he might be an impostor, an espy; for I look away from him, and in a moment I look to him again, and I behold his tablets. Oh! he was to the work of writing down all I say! Indeed, I was angry. But soon I discover he was no imposter and no espy. He is a very good man; I love him indeed; so cheerful! so gay! so pleasant.'

Boswell, as readers will remember, tried hard to enlist British assistance for Corsica, and himself sent Paoli by private subscription in Scotland £700 worth of 'cannon and warlike stores'. In defence of his devotion he risked being gored by Johnson, whom the subject of the brave islanders perennially enraged. Bidden to 'empty his head of Corsica,' he made the famous reply: 'Empty my head of Corsica! Empty it of honour, empty it of humanity, empty it of friendship, empty it of piety. No! While I live', etc. How Johnson met this outburst is, I believe, unchronicled. Probably that 'master of human nature', as Boswell termed him, gave the 'smile of complacency' with which on certain recorded occasions he acknowledged spontaneous sincerity on the part of his lively young friend. One outstanding fact becomes clear as our knowledge of Boswell expands, viz. that Paoli exerted at least as lasting a good influence over him as Johnson.

Readers broken to the clipped and casual utterances of modern youth may well feel surprise on remembering that Boswell was anything but elderly during the period of his association with Johnson. When he first met the sage (in the parlour behind the bookshop of Tom Davies who had the very pretty wife), he was twenty-three; when he undertook with him the famous tour to the Hebrides he was thirty-three; when, in 1784, Johnson died, he was forty-four. He himself died at fifty-five. The generality of people live longer nowadays, having taken longer to grow up. They drink less and their arteries last better. 'The earth,' said Wilkes during a drought, 'is as thirsty as Boswell—and as cracked.'

From his youth Boswell sought the society of his seniors. It was an instinctive part of his cult of eminent persons. Fanny Burney observed in him 'an odd mock solemnity of tone and manner, that he had acquired imperceptibly from constantly thinking of and imitating Dr. Johnson'.

A core of sympathetic sagacity was the secret of his success as fomenter of other people's self-expression. When he gave Beattie an introduction to Johnson he added to details as to when Beattie should call:

'It may be necessary to exert yourself with Mr. Johnson. You must not be discouraged though he should appear reserved and wanting in commonplace modes of making a stranger easy. Bring him upon something worthy of his ability as soon as you can, and I'll promise you conversation superior to any you have ever heard.'

Boswell was zealous in serving his friends. No one handier at dressing a wound or administering a

soothing draught. Witness the occasion when Percy (of the *Reliques*), having got ajar with Johnson, Boswell coaxed the latter into writing him a letter testifying to Percy's 'unquestionable merit'. Shown the letter, Percy said he 'would rather have it than degrees from all the Universities in Europe'. The final step in reconciliation was an invitation from Boswell to Percy to dine at General Paoli's in South Audley Street 'to meet Dr. Johnson'. Boswell habitually acted on the kindly principle of letting people hear of any good said of them by others. 'I think, sir,' said he, 'it is right to tell a man of a handsome thing which has been said of him. It tends to increase benevolence.' To which the august one replied: 'Undoubtedly it is right, sir'.

Boswell could wriggle out of social entanglements with airy ease. When 'the worthy amiable Sir Alexander Dick' asked him to show his worthless manuscript, 'a British Georgick,' to the publisher, Strahan, Boswell 'evaded his inclination, laying hold of what he had declared as to intending his Georgick only for his son and his descendants, and telling him that to shew it to Strahan who, as Garrick said, was an *obtuse man*, would be like shewing family furniture to an auctioneer'. He trembled, no doubt, for his future *Life* when Johnson one day stated that for fear of tempting to publication he purposely wrote letters as drily and insipidly as he could. Rallying his forces, Boswell made a serpentlike reply. 'I suggested that his writing so would most certainly make his letter be preserved and published; for it would be a choice curiosity to see Dr. Johnson write ill.'

Never did Boswell's tact shine forth so radiantly as when, during ten weeks' rain and cold, he 'lugged' Johnson ('lug' was Goldsmith's dissuasive word before-

hand) across 'the rocks of Scotland' and the western isles. Johnson, often difficult enough in his armchair at the Mitre, was now sixty-four, long unused to roughing it, ill suited by constitution to toss on squally seas or ride a 'shelty' some sizes too small. Yet Boswell never wavered in his self-appointed task as showman-conductor, never sulked or stamped, and finally brought the great English moralist back to their starting-point more his friend than ever.

Nothing he did not foresee or provide to make the progress a success. In Edinburgh, where he induced all the right people to meet Johnson, he gave him grouse, carefully selected veal and gallons of tea. A Collings-Rowlandson caricature portrays Mrs. Boswell, in the kitchen, rolling pastry, and Boswell, a pen over his ear and Ogden in his pocket, decapitating a fowl, while through a door Johnson is seen out for a stroll.

From the first hour of the tour to the last Boswell spread the honey of reverential flattery. When Johnson congratulated him on having reasoned well in a legal discussion at St. Andrews, he returned: 'It was with your arguments. But it was much that I could wield the arms of Goliath.' Stimulating notes everywhere preceded his fellow-traveller and himself. 'I cannot be in this country without making you a bow. Besides, Mr. Johnson says, he would go two miles out of his way to see Lord Monboddo. I have sent forward my servant, that we may know if your lordship be at home.' Great was the delight when Johnson and distinguished Scots took to one another. 'Bravo! thought I; they agree like brothers.' Sometimes, a well planned meeting went amiss and Boswell's *savoir faire* was strained to its limit to maintain an appearance of smoothness.

He was as artful as an artful woman in screwing up his companion to face a toilsome excursion.

'Last night I was afraid Dr. Johnson was beginning to faint in his resolution; for he said "If we must ride much, we shall not go; and there's an end on't". To-day, when he talked of Sky with spirit, I said, "Why, sir, you seemed to despond yesterday. You are a delicate Londoner. You are a maccaroni! You can't ride."' To which Johnson: 'Sir, I shall ride better than you.'

Boswell inherited readiness from his vigorous-minded parent, Lord Auchinleck, who was a Judge of the Scottish Court of Sessions. The sharpest ordeal of the Scottish tour may well have been the introduction to each other at Auchinleck of 'Ursa Major' and Lord Auchinleck. At least once during the visit Johnson was scored off. He jeeringly inquired of his host whether any single good book on theology had ever been written by a Presbyterian minister in Scotland. Nettled and at a loss, Lord Auchinleck, whose studies had not lain in the direction of theology, suddenly recalled a title seen in catalogues, *Durham on the Galatians*, and he struck out with: 'Pray, sir, have you read Mr. Durham's excellent commentary on the Galatians?' To which the arch-gladiator, worsted, could only answer: 'No, sir'. Any filial glow Boswell may have felt at his father's 'lucky thought' must have been chilled by doubts as to the success of what remained of the Auchinleck week-end.

MICHAEL DUGDALE

THE HOLY HANDKERCHIEF

I

THE MIRACLE

On occasions of importance such as these, the horse would come into its own, and discarding limousines the aristocracy would emerge in its carriages, on whose lustrous panels a crest, coronet, or monogram could be shown to the utmost advantage. Only the parvenu or the provincial would, on such days, flaunt the vulgarity of a Rolls-Royce. Such was the practice in the capital, and such the known desire of the Sovereign. The habit, so thought Peter Huntercombe-Hartnell, as on foot he skirted the Place du St. Mouchoir, was a pleasant one. The scene that he watched, and in which, he reflected with pleasure, he participated, was animated and beautiful. The sun shone with unusual vigour upon the square, and sparkled brightly from gilded balconies, vivid with gaily-dressed spectators. Below them passed in endless procession, splendid in uniform and glittering with jewels, the nobility. How different, and how dull the scene, had they been hidden in motor-cars! As it was, archdukes and their duchesses, prelates and ambassadors, were displayed to their view as clearly as though they had been jewels in the windows of Cartier. And the image is a just one. Cartier himself could hardly hope to rival the splendid ornaments that glittered, with more than sunset light, upon the heads and shoulders of the ladies in the carriages.

The procession filed through the square towards the cathedral. Its progress was necessarily slow, and Peter had ample opportunity to recognize, and occasionally to greet, the noble occupants. High life was here in force, and the scene was as vividly romantic as a page from the *Almanac de Gotha*. He noticed and bowed slightly to the Dowager Duchess of Freudenbourg-Fürstenau, as she drove past, deaf and dotty, in her victoria. She returned his salute with a gay wave of her ear-trumpet.

To-day was the second feast of the Holy Handkerchief. Ever since the day, so many years ago, when the divine strip of linen had fluttered, in spite of a strong contrary wind, all the way from Palestine, accompanied by seventeen doves, whose descendants still swarmed in the cathedral square, the feast had been held on the first and third Thursdays in May. On these days the relic would be pulled carefully out from its golden casket, and displayed to the populace, while the divine features would develop with wonderful splendour on its yellow surface. Those, too, who observed it, would, if in a suitable state of mind, be instantly cured of whatever disease they might be suffering.

A fortnight ago, unfortunately, the miracle had somehow miscarried, and even the most faithful had been unable to detect the slightest manifestation.

To-day, therefore, was an anxious occasion. Would the prayers and offerings of two weeks prove effective? The Court had gone into mourning, and all functions had been put off. For a fortnight all theatres, cafés, and haunts of pleasure less respectable had been closed. For a fortnight the town had not sinned—or not much. And to-day was to prove how far this unusual virtue had been

effective. Certainly the weather was propitious—perhaps, indeed, a little too hot.

Peter Huntercombe-Hartnell, lately arrived in the capital, but already much in favour in Court circles, felt the heat of the day excessively. The Embassy had not, during the preceding fortnight, felt itself bound to respect the order for virtuous living, under which the rest of the town had lain. There had been one or two discreet parties, nothing large, but occasionally late, and he was tired. The English colony, who, of course, had been the only guests, were inclined to be exhausting in their jollifications. He looked forward with some misgiving to the ceremony before him, as he mopped his brow and made his way towards the cathedral.

On reaching the door, a huge baroque porch, whose broken pediment was crowned by a gilt group representing the Emperor Adrian the Second (that great conqueror) and the Archangel Gabriel, entwined with unusual mateyness and supported on twisted and monolithic columns of flamingo-coloured marble, he pulled out the envelope that contained his ticket and a little note from the Crown Prince:

‘I have got a nice seat for you beside Tossy Kittner, where we can look at each other during the service, and perhaps giggle a little if the miracle fails again; though the Cardinal assures me it will not.’

An incurable romantic, Peter enjoyed his popularity, for he could pass elegantly up the long aisle, bowing left and right to his friends, as he had entered—so often—the George Restaurant at Oxford. The cathedral was already very full. He noticed the Dowager Duchess of Freudenbourg-Fürstenau, who had just arrived and was

finding it difficult to manage ear-trumpet and lorgnette with the same hand. Decrepit now, and scarcely right in the head, she had in her youth been the heroine of more than one escapade that had caused comment. Near her, talking in a whisper to the languishing and spiritual Princess Luna of Einstadt, sat Mlle. d'Archambault, who, it was said, had so lavishly obeyed the recent order for holy living as to spread treacle on her pillow, and to put salt, not sugar, into her coffee. The treatment, however, had not impaired the brightness of her eye, nor the brilliancy of her complexion. Her cheeks were prettily pink.

'A little *patchy*, perhaps,' he reflected, 'but I suppose that's the treacle.'

Sitting alone in a box—pink, with arabesques of old gold—the Princess Hermine des Fleurs du Mal scanned, with eager glasses, the royal seats, calculating with feminine rapidity the exact cost of the brocade hangings therein.

Peter sat down in the seat that the Crown Prince had secured for him. It commanded a good view of the Imperial balcony, as yet untenanted save by a profusion of gilt cherubim, that writhed in un-Christian nudity over the canopy.

'In church, too,' the Empress would complain, 'and setting such a bad example. I am sure, after what has happened, that it should be removed.' But her husband remained obdurate.

As soon as Peter had settled himself into his seat, and exchanged words of greeting with his neighbour, a young man from Vienna, whose very profile suggested the swooning rhythms of that gay capital, the great organ, which had hitherto been droning indefinitely and hardly

loud enough to compete with the general whispering, suddenly burst into the National Anthem, and gave notice that the Imperial party were about to enter their balcony.

The Emperor first, with the Star of St. Fiacre prominent among minor constellations on his breast, then the Empress, wearing the Österbach diamonds, and a gown of black velvet that moulded her ample hips. With them was the Crown Prince, splendid in the uniform of the 68th Hussars, his white teeth showing between smiling lips. A rustle of reverence and approval greeted their arrival, during which the Prince found time to smile at Peter, sitting opposite; and from time to time during the service they would exchange glances of intimacy.

The occasion was one of glitter and beauty, but also, to the thoughtful, of anxiety. The Empress, as she fanned herself with lilac ostrich feathers, and eyed with disapproval the generously carved behind of a cherub on the canopy above her, wondered what would happen if the miracle failed again. Her husband had been excessively put out by the former occasion, and he could be difficult, poor soul, at the best of times, especially, she sighed reminiscently, at breakfast. How, too, would the Press take another failure? There had been nasty remarks already in some less reputable papers. But we were all Socialists now, she supposed; under her father-in-law, the greatest of the Adrians, these things could not have happened—and she plunged into vain regrets.

But if the Empress was worried she was not alone, for far off, beyond the limits of space and time, the Holy Veronica, in her seat among the blessed, was worried also. A fortnight earlier, when the fiasco had taken place, no one on earth had been more concerned, or surprised,

than the saint. Never before had it happened; never had Father Eutropius neglected his duty so lamentably. For it was his concern to make sure, before the service, that the preparation guaranteed to darken, and become visible when exposed to the light, was fresh and strong. It had evaporated, naturally, in the course of a year. Did he suppose it would keep without attention? Did he expect her to work a miracle, or something as preposterous?

True, the mischance had had some good effect. The noisome stench of sin that rose in such clouds from the city had been to some slight extent purified during the fortnight. But Heaven helps those who help themselves, and fervently did she hope that the priest had been a little more careful this time. She need not have worried; for the evening before, until the first rays of the rising sun had shone over the twin towers of the College of St. François Regis, Father Eutropius had sat up in an ecstasy of penitence, renewing the vivid hues of the Holy Countenance with that ingenious composition, which would fade in the dark, only to become resplendently visible on the morrow in the cathedral.

There could be no doubts this time.

The organ had stopped, and the Cardinal started to pray.

The Almighty would not have forgotten—it was only fourteen days since—that He had chosen to rebuke His people by withholding from their sight the blessed features of His Son. Would He now be so merciful as to consider that the period of sinlessness—truly a short one, but nevertheless an indication of a great change of heart—was a sufficient atonement?

The Holy Handkerchief was again to be withdrawn from its resting-place. Once more, O Lord—the Cardinal's voice rang with splendid confidence; he and Father Eutropius had tested the relic together—once more, O Lord, they were to see the miracle; once more the goodness of God was to be made manifest.

He was silent. Peter sat watching the Imperial family. The Empress was tearing the feathers of her fan. The Emperor's fingers drummed upon his knee. The Prince was trying to control twitching lips. Peter felt the elbow of Tossy Kittner in his ribs. The atmosphere became agonizingly tense. Bells tinkled, lace-draped figures bobbed up and down in adoration and anxiety. Clouds of incense rolled with all the menace of a thunder-storm round the cathedral, as Father Eutropius lifted the lid of the reliquary, and took out the Handkerchief. Between finger and thumb he held it, and slowly spread it out before the congregation. A curious gurgle—or was it a hiccup?—from behind proved that the Princess Hermine des Fleurs du Mal was finding the situation too much for her, while the ghost of a scream testified to the painful emotions that Mlle. d'Archambault was undergoing. She was never given to self-control, and her penance—poor lady—had been severe.

All gazed intently at the frayed and faded square of linen, and reminded themselves that the miracle was always slow in starting. Only the faces of the Cardinal, and of Father Eutropius betrayed no emotion.

Thus, perhaps, for half a minute. Though all were gazing, it was the tortoiseshell lorgnon of the Dowager Duchess that caught the first sign, and her loud and raven-like croak that first announced the renewal of the Divine favour. In a second it was apparent to all, and

a deep and awful sigh went up, as upon the surface of the relic the familiar lineaments began to appear. Slowly they increased in strength, until with a clearness and beauty quite unusual the Holy Features lay clear upon the cloth.

Only the faces of the Cardinal and of Father Eutropius betrayed no emotion.

'We've not had so successful a miracle since our wedding year,' wrote the Empress that evening in her diary, 'I shall not bother about the cherubs (the little monsters) *ever* again.'

'A failure, followed by a conspicuous success,' wrote the Cardinal in his, 'has long been a favourite device of jugglers and other mountebanks. The applause they gain is ultimately the greater. How strange are these parallels of small things and of great!'—a point which he subsequently developed in a sermon.

Peter and his neighbour, Tossy Kittner from the Austrian Embassy, left the cathedral together.

Outside in the sun, rank and fashion were discussing the event, as they postured and posed to the spasmodic clicking of cameras.

'A walk-over, absolutely,' wheezed Lord Water-pleasure, an elderly Irish Peer, whom reasons of convenience had compelled to desert his native country; 'the best, in my recollection, since '87.' But none present could or would remember so far back.

'We had a good one, if you recall, in '94, when the dear Cardinal fell all the way down the steps in his excitement.'

Leaving the elderlies to their reminiscences, the mind of the Princess Hermine ran on different lines.

'Now, perhaps,' she said, 'we can go to the theatre

again. The Tommy brothers at the Etrusca! I've dreamt of them for a fortnight.'

But the Princess Luna was more spiritual.

'Oh!' was all she could gasp, and 'Oh——!' Noticing a camera that was being aimed in her direction, she assumed a pose of dramatic uplift, that was duly perpetuated for the readers of the fashionable Press.

Exhausted by emotion, Mlle. d'Archambault was far from being herself. She ran rapidly from group to group.

'A party,' she said; I'm having a party. Lord Water-pleasure, come to my party. Lady Archery, Princess Hermine, you must all come. Tossy! I've never been so nervous in my life. I thought I should die!'

'Yes,' replied Herr Kittner, 'I noticed that you were moved.'

To the whirring of many cinematographic cameras, the Emperor and the Empress were climbing into their coach. The Crown Prince, more democratic, preferred to wait a little. He joined Peter.

'The Cardinal, as always, was accurately informed,' he said, 'for myself, I had no serious doubts.'

'Her Majesty, I noticed,' replied Peter, 'was anxious.'

'Poor mother! She is a prey to her nerves.'

Mlle. d'Archambault fluttered up and achieved, with some difficulty, a curtsy.

'Your Highness, may I—will you—perhaps—a party,' she ventured.

'I shall be delighted.'

The heat, however, was becoming unbearable, and slowly the crowd dispersed again to their carriages, and once more the glittering procession filed slowly through the Place du St. Mouchoir. Already the appearance of the town had changed. Along the Boulevard Martinique

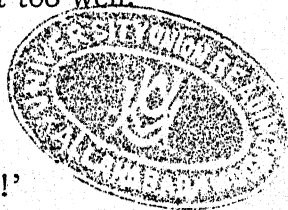
the cafés, shut for two weeks, had spread their tables over the wide pavement. The cinemas in the Place Rudolph Valentino were open, and besieged by crowds. Flags of all nations flew from every housetop, and were strung and wreathed across the street. The Ritz had thrown out a green awning, the Bristol a pink one, and gala was in the air.

To Peter was accorded the privilege of driving a little way in the Prince's carriage.

'There is nothing like a successful miracle to make the town gay,' remarked his Highness, as they passed a café well known to the more light-hearted of the capital, and even at so early an hour already noisy.

'And this one has succeeded well—almost too well.'

II THE PARTY



'His Imperial Highness, the Crown Prince!'

Rattled but happy, Mlle. d'Archambault hurried up to greet her guest. Her party was being a success, she thought; and so it should after such a fortnight of boredom. She herself had put seven lumps of sugar into her coffee, and had enjoyed every drop of it. Tossy was being—as always—charming, and she liked his English friend, though English people, as a rule, puzzled her. 'You never know,' she had confided to the Princess Luna, 'where you are with them.'

'Such a *deep* nation, I always think,' the Princess had replied, and to stress her point had added: 'such *depth*'.

Mlle. d'Archambault's two small drawing-rooms were furnished in exquisite, if haphazard, taste. They had been rightly described by a society journalist as a 'casket of

art'. Originally modern and chic in the best '*art décoratif*' manner, she had filled them with a strange assortment of pictures and furniture, of all periods and in all styles; and she adopted the same principle with her guests. To-night these consisted chiefly of the Church, the peerage, and the arts. The stage she would not countenance in spite of the Princess Hermine's entreaty that the Tommy Brothers should be sent invitations.

'Theatricals,' she insisted, 'do not know how to behave. And my rooms are full of breakables.'

'Just the dark one, you needn't ask both,' the Princess has cajoled—implored. But on this point Mlle. d'Archambault had remained firm, and the Princess in consequence sulked the whole evening; nor could the blandishments of Father Eutropius tempt her to taste so much as a *bombe glacée*.

'Her Grace, the Duchess-Dowager of Freudenbourg-Fürstenau.'

Leaning on a stick the old lady hobbled into the room. She, who in her youth had shocked society with her doings, and more deeply shocked it in her age with her memoirs, was perhaps the most formidable woman in Europe.

On this occasion she was dressed in mulberry velvet, over which she wore a shawl of pinkish tartan. In her hand she held her ear-trumpet, carved into the ivory semblance of a swan, whose amber beak nibbled into the recesses of her ear. She glanced rapidly round the room as though in search of prey. Her eye fell upon the Crown Prince, and she was off to rate him with his bad behaviour during the service. For several minutes her raucous voice rang through the room.

‘Giggling like a baboon! Adrian, why must you always be so middle-class?’

Nor was she pacified by his excuses and apologies, since, as her ear-trumpet was not to her ear, she could hear none of them.

In a corner, under a pink-shaded lamp sat Miss Adelaide Afterthought, daughter of the English Ambassador, talking to Peter. Fond of sport, and poor at conversation, her arms, though excellent on the tennis-court, were a little over-developed for the evening. Detecting a certain Bohemian atmosphere she was doing her best to discuss literature.

‘The Russians,’ she explained apologetically, ‘appear to me so morbid.’

‘Most, *most* morbid,’ agreed Peter, with enthusiasm. He was longing to leave her side, for he could see through a door that the party in the next room was becoming gay. ‘*Most* morbid.’

Could the Crown Prince perhaps be drunk? Such things had been known upon even less festive occasions than this. From his corner in the shadows, Michael Cecil observed events, and switched out his note-book. While others played, Michael Cecil worked, for he was editor of a social column ‘Through my lorgnon in Queer Street’, and copy had been scarce lately. He had seldom been so happy. Surrounded as he was by royalty in whose smiles it was his delight to bask, and whose failings his duty to record, he was able to mix business with pleasure as no one else could. Here, he felt, was material for the spiciest paragraphs.

And it may be remarked—in parenthesis—that it was greatly to the credit of Mlle. d’Archambault and her friends that even society journalists were tolerated socially,

provided they were amiable to talk to, and presentable to look at. Only the Dowager Duchess felt differently, but since, like many deaf people, she could not control the pitch of her voice, her remarks were as embarrassing to their victim as if all present had felt as harshly as she did on the subject.

Unconscious, however, or undismayed, by the presence of the Press, Peter, liberated at last from Miss Afterthought's views on Dostoievsky, joined the Crown Prince in the next room. Here the atmosphere was slightly different, and, he could not but feel, more fitting to the occasion. In the other room the presence of so much elderly royalty had been oppressive. Here all was gaiety and lightness of heart. There the Dowager Duchess was airing her views on the subject of Michael Cecil. Here Tossy Kittner was explaining, with examples, how divinely the natives danced in certain warm Pacific Islands, where he had lately been. Posturing lightly, bending and swaying, he was causing his hostess the most elaborate emotions, and constrained her to leave a moment her duties, and to taste for the first time her own champagne. At the end of so trying a day she felt spiritually over-balanced. Even the Princess Hermine was almost inclined to compare him favourably with the darker of the Tommy Brothers. Tactfully the Crown Prince put a disc on the gramophone, whose rhythmic throb went straight to the heart.

In the other room the older royalties prepared to go.

'They have a motion of the hips,' Tossy explained, 'like this, and like this.' He leant ever so far backwards.

'But you must imagine me quite brown, and with nothing on,' he said, and darkness closed about him.

Mlle. d'Archambault's lights had fused.

In the other room the older royalties were calling for candles, in vain.

Darkness and the rhythm of the music induced loss of head. Peter felt uncertain of what was happening; he seemed to be dancing; he seemed to be on a sofa.

'Candles', called the older royalties, but no hostess answered their call.

'Tossy,' called the Crown Prince, with malice. There was no answer.

Someone fell on to the sofa beside Peter. With his fingers he recognized the sequined frock of the Princess Hermine. Forgotten, momentarily, was the darker Tommy.

'I'm frightened,' she whispered, and Peter did his best to console her; successfully, so he judged.

'Perhaps,' came the calm voice of the Crown Prince, 'I had better light a match.'

Cleaning up, later, the debris, Mlle. d'Archambault's thoughts were in a turmoil. She picked up a diamond ear-ring from amid a heap of what had once been Sèvres. It had belonged, she remembered, to the Princess Luna, who was always so careful of her jewellery. In a small puddle of claret, that was ruining her Aubusson, there floated like a silver ship the left shoe of the Princess Hermine. She had gone home apparently with one only; but she had always been careless of appearances. These things did not matter, but it struck Mlle. d'Archambault as being excessive when she noticed a pink silk stocking showing from among the orchids on her Buhl console. She pulled it out as one might draw out a repulsive snake, and looked at the name.

'Adelaide Afterthought.'

Believing in moderation she frowned, and far off beyond the limits of space and time the Holy Veronica, in her seat among the blessed, frowned also. For once more she detected the familiar vaporous spirals coil upwards from the city; once more there assailed her quivering nostril the heavy odour of sin and debauch.

Her miracle had succeeded—almost too well.

HILAIRE BELLOC

BALLADE OF ILLEGAL
ORNAMENTS

'... the controversy was ended by his Lordship; who wrote to the Incumbent ordering him to remove from the church all illegal ornaments at once, and especially a Female Figure with a Child.'

I

When that the Eternal deigned to look
On us poor folk to make us free,
He chose a Maiden, whom He took
From Nazareth in Galilee;
Since when the Islands of the Sea,
The Field, the City, and the Wild
Proclaim aloud triumphantly
A Female Figure with a Child.

II

These mysteries profoundly shook
The Reverend Doctor Leigh, D.D.,
Who therefore stuck into a Nook
(Or Niche) of his incumbency
An image filled with majesty
To represent the Undefined,
The Universal Mother—She—
A Female Figure with a Child.

III

His Bishop, having read a book
Which proved as plain as plain could be
That all the Mutts had been mistook
Who talked about a Trinity,
Wrote off at once to Doctor Leigh
In manner very far from mild,
And said: 'Remove them instantly!
A Female Figure with a Child!'

ENVOI

Prince Jesus in mine Agony
Permit me, broken and defiled,
Through blurred and glazing eyes to see
A Female Figure with a Child.

PETER QUENNELL

THE SECRET HISTORY OF HENRIETTA

The Secret History of Henrietta, Princess of England; and Memoirs of the Court of France, 1688-9, by M^{de}. de la Fayette. Translated by J. M. Shelmerdine (Routledge. 10s. 6d.). Propped up among cushions, Madame was lying on the floor. Her head rested affectionately against the kind shoulder of her companion and confidante, Madame de la Fayette. The novelist watched and, as she watched, her mistress's face seemed to change. 'Her beauty,' she reflected, 'so apparent whilst she was awake, was but little seen in sleep.' She looked, no doubt, more than usually sickly; the Stuart under-lip was more than ever protruberant. Presently she awoke, complaining of a pang at her side. Monsieur's coach was announced; he was leaving for Paris. A visitor, Madame de Meckelbourg, was ushered in; while they were still talking, an attendant brought her the cup of chicory-water which she had ordered some moments previously. Hardly had she drunk it, when a spasm of pain caused her to cry out. The colour deserted her cheeks; her face became dully livid. She was half carried from the room, unlaced with difficulty, and put to bed. Writhing between the sheets, she declared that the agony she was suffering was 'inconceivable'. She also declared that she had been poisoned. There were vomitings and dreadful prostration. Her hands and feet grew cold. Monsieur, her husband, stood about the room, helpless, but visibly 'touched'. The King had been at supper when the news first reached him. He commanded

his equipage and arrived in company with the Queen and the Grande Mademoiselle, duchesse de Montpensier. His concubines, Madame de Montespan and Mademoiselle de la Vallière, followed in the same coach. The death-chamber, as death-chambers of that period were apt to do, buzzed with interested spectators. Louis spoke of God; he turned towards Madame de la Fayette and, she records, 'did her the honour of remarking' that the doctors had obviously lost their heads; which was plain enough. Then, with tears in his eyes, he bade his sister-in-law farewell. Everybody knew, or at least everybody suspected, that Louis and Henrietta had once been in love; that it was only la Vallière and her gentle ox-like beauty which had ousted the sickly, vivacious little English princess from the dominion of the monarch's heart—Madame begged him not to weep. After he had gone, she called Madame de la Fayette, bidding her observe that her nose was already pinched in like a corpse's. She confessed and was severely admonished by the canon of Saint-Cloud. She received the English Ambassador. At last, drowsiness supervened; at half-past two in the morning her women saw her make a slight convulsive movement of the lips and immediately expire. The whole Court had known that she was dying; '*effroyable nouvelle . . . Madame se meurt, Madame est morte!*' Now the whole Court believed that she had been poisoned—by the cup of chicory-water, it was said, not by the water, but by the cup itself. This porcelain cup had been impregnated with some mysterious venom. The poison had been secretly dispatched from Italy by the chevalier de Lorraine, her husband's disastrous favourite.

To the rumour of her assassination how much credence was to be attached? Many of the courtiers, including the

duc de Saint-Simon, were predisposed to believe it. Madame de la Fayette, whose account of her mistress's philanderings and tragic end is here for the first time fully translated into English, seems to have been more open-minded. Whereas Madame Palatine, Philipped'Orléans's second wife, a clumsy, yet quick-witted and sharp-tongued German girl, afterwards the most vindictive and embittered of dowagers, who astonished the French Court alike by the purity of her morals and the scatological pleasantries which formed her chief source of conversation, made no scruple in affirming that it was perfectly true. Her letters supply copious detail. A friend of Lorraine's, one d'Effiat, had been noticed suspiciously fumbling round the cupboard where the incriminated vessel was kept stored. No, there was not the smallest doubt of it; her predecessor had succumbed to the malice of a certain person who had since returned to France and was even now basking in the sunshine of her husband's favour. Maybe he would have been glad to get rid of her too; but, though far less beautiful, she was also far more level-headed than the unfortunate Henrietta of England. Besides, she was on her guard. Rude and brutal, always on the defensive, always in a rage, she composed interminable letters to her friends in Germany, describing the manifold difficulties, perils, inconveniences, humiliations which beset a sister-in-law of the King of France.

Primarily, her husband's character was at fault. That, in her own way, the gentler Englishwoman had been quick to appreciate. Passions which he could neither suppress, nor yet dared openly to avow, made Philippe, though he himself was not especially ill-natured, the centre of perpetual intrigues. He was weak and indecisive, yet jealous of his privileges, immensely conscious

of his rank. From childhood he had been sacrificed to his brother; Louis XIV could not afford to have near him another Gaston d'Orleans. The lessons of the Fronde had been learnt. Thus Mazarin, and afterwards Louis, spared no pains to instil into his mind the secondary nature of his functions. Mazarin went farther; Philippe was a pretty little boy, and if he liked dressing up in petticoats all the better. Parties were arranged with the future abbé de Choisy and other children. 'They pierced my ears', Choisy relates in his Memoirs (quoted by la Batut in his excellent monograph, *La Cour de Monsieur*). 'They gave me diamonds, patches, and all the different fal-lals to which one so easily grows accustomed and which it is so hard to dispense with. . . .' Monsieur appeared; he was undressed and caparisoned as a little girl. Whereupon the children solemnly ranged themselves about the table to play cards. This ceremony was enacted three or four times a week. Much later in life Philippe was never so happy as wearing feminine disguise; it was a diversion which he never tired of. But, as he grew up, a sense of his royal dignity began to tug him in the opposite direction. Tormented indeed must be the existence of a prince of the blood who is none the less immoderately addicted to hero-worship! His idols treated him badly; he adored the comte de Guiche, but Guiche, upon Philippe's arrival at some masked ball *en Bohémienne*, pretended not to recognize his master, insulted him, and finished by publicly administering 'several violent kicks in the lower part of the back'. Poor Philippe was careful to seem amused, but it is no wonder that, amid such violent subterranean upheavals, he had small time or tenderness to spare for the two hapless princesses whom reasons of political expediency had compelled him to gather into his arms.

In early middle-life, Philippe was an ineffective, but not unambitious personage, bearing up an unimposing stature upon a pair of extravagantly high heels. He still enjoyed the opportunities of a fancy-dress party. He wore rouge, and gazed long and affectionately into every mirror that he passed. He liked the society of women, advised them in all questions of what they should or should not wear, but he was entirely proof against the advances which the bolder and less scrupulous of them sometimes made. Would she excuse him while he put on his gloves, he had asked a lady upon one peculiarly difficult occasion. Like Condé, he combined these tastes with a considerable taste for war and the hardships of campaigning; he exposed himself so consistently in the trenches that his brother used to observe to him, with acid intention, that he would be turning into a sand-bag unless he took good care. True, he had held up an attack while he settled the curls of his peruke; but his intrepidity has never been denied. Yet, in spite of reiterated demands, he was refused any real part in the management of war or peace. He was dismissed, evasively but firmly, as a person whose judgement could not be trusted save in matters of the embroidery, jewels and perfumes that he knew and loved.

Such a situation and such a husband the least sentimental of princesses might have found it difficult to manage. Henrietta, like her brother Charles II of England, had intelligence in plenty; but her intelligence and vivacity were usually misapplied. Like him, she was affectionate and warmhearted, indiscreet always, but seldom foolish. The singular charm with which she blossomed, the graces of her person and her wit, are of the kind as impalpable after death as, while she still lived,

the fascination which they exercised was pervasive. She had *douceur*, Madame de la Fayette explains; she was sweet, curiously winning. She captivated by her freshness—the odd, deceitful freshness of a woman whose lungs were attacked and who suffered horribly all her life. There were colics, miscarriages, agonizing child-births. She was hump-backed, her enemies declared; certainly one of her shoulders was higher than the other, though, amid a world of misshapen, iron-corseted, pock-marked and squinting heiresses, that in itself was no uncommon disadvantage. When young, she had been painfully meagre, so frail and so fleshless, that Louis had given her the scornful nickname of ‘the Bones of the Holy Innocents’. Monsieur’s tastes were more accommodating; he welcomed marriages just as he welcomed christenings and funerals. They allowed him to display his knowledge of precedence and court-ceremonial, and afforded a legitimate excuse for dressing-up. Their union, otherwise, was irksome, almost from the first moments. He hated being compelled to share a room, could not abide being touched in his sleep, and insisted on his companion occupying the farthest limit of the bed—with the result, Madame Palatine lamented, that she was perpetually tumbling out. Worse still, he was jealous—not jealous of his wife’s love, but jealous of his own conjugal dignity. Madame became the focus of admiration; she captivated Louis. He forgot his opprobrious nicknames, and night after night they used to walk in deep converse along the margin of the canal at Fontainebleau; ballets, fireworks, collations. Already scandals were surrounding her. Then Guiche was attracted into her service; then Vardes. A struggle rapidly developed betwixt the favourites of Monsieur, on the one hand, and those of Madame on the other. Both

parties were utterly unscrupulous. No quarter was given, and even death hardly emphasized their severance. 'Alas, Monsieur,' she cried, as her husband stood over her in her extremity, 'for a long time now you have not loved me; but that was unjust, for I have never failed you.' Scanning his tear-stained face, Madame de la Fayette could not believe that Philippe d'Orleans himself had any share in the poisoning.

The scene was set for murder; but that Madame's death was natural is the considered verdict of the modern historian. At her autopsy the doctors imagined that a tiny rent, which they had discovered in the inner lining of the stomach, had been effected by their own clumsy scissors. Actually, it was the mark of a perforated ulcer. So the legend of the poisoned cup vanishes, while the chief actors in the tragedy remain equally memorable—the chevalier de Lorraine, insolent, dissipated, ambitious, with his diabolical good looks; Monsieur, a figure sympathetic in his essence, though circumstances combined to make him irremediably absurd; lastly Madame. While attempting to re-assess Madame's character, it is important that we should insist that Henrietta was, above all, an extremely clever woman; she was a political agent on whom her brother and brother-in-law both relied. Of her conduct, the severest we can say is that her employment of the curious, irrecapturable charm, which, even in her portraits has not entirely evaporated, was usually somewhat reckless and lackadaisical. No doubt, she was enormously indiscreet; but she had *douceur*, she had *bonté*. They are qualities which run through the soul like an easy, purifying current; they are as innocent of calculation as they are exempt from the ordinary moral standards.

WILLIAM PLOMER

A JAPANESE POETESS

Placidly a window-screen is opened by the landlord's
daughter,

A buxom rustic poetess of seventeen,
Very sentimental, and smelling queerly clean
Like a white chrysanthemum in a glass of water.
The subjects of her verses are in the usual taste,
Conventional without dullness, and without coldness
chaste:

The taste of the sound of silence in the snow,
The vanishing of the twilight shadows of a pine tree on a
lonely beach,
The scented oblivion of the voices of those who were
lovers long ago,
And the sense of the irreparable in an opening flower of
peach.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

THE PROPHET AND HIS WIFE¹

The wrong is mixed. In tragic life, God wot
No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:
We are betrayed by what is false within.

The *Later Dairy* covers the period from 1891 to 1897. We possessed already the Countess Tolstoy's diary from 1860 to 1891, published under the title, *The Diary of Tolstoy's Wife*, also her *Autobiography* (Hogarth Press). Several accounts of Tolstoy's last days have also been translated; of his flight from home, what preceded it, and his death at the station-master's house at Astapovo. V. G. Chertkov, the disciple nearest Tolstoy during his last years, and in the Countesses's eyes the 'villain', has written his own account of these events, in which account the Countess herself appears as 'the villain'. But there is one narrative which, though written in loving admiration of Tolstoy, does not blame his wife. (See *Family Views of Tolstoy*. Allen & Unwin.). His daughter Alexandra merely tells us what happened. And there is much more material to be translated before the whole of this fragment of 'tragic life' is before us.

The *Later Dairy* is a very remarkable document, but it cannot be understood unless we look before and after, and that reminder is the chief service which a commentator can render to anyone who has not yet read it. The end of the period which it covers is still thirteen

¹ *The Countess Tolstoy's Later Dairy, 1891-97.* (Gollancz. 12s. 6d.)

years from the end of the whole story—there are still thirteen years of struggle between husband and wife to come; while the beginning of the period is separated from Tolstoy's 'conversion' by about the same number of years. If this diary is read as though it were itself the whole story, it must give a very false impression of Tolstoy, though it gives, no doubt, a true picture of the sufferings of his wife. Many of the charges she brings against him during this period are true: that also is certain. In this document, therefore (1891 to 1897), clearly 'the wrong is mixed'. Later, however, with increasing old age, Tolstoy came nearer to being what he strove to be, while she remained bitterly, egotistically devoted: her love transmuted into merciless possession—save at moments, instinctively created by her at the cost of any torture to herself and him, because *then*, for a while at any rate, they met again behind the daily tug of wills and bickering of tongues in tired mutual agony: 'I will not let you go'.

I do not think myself that towards the story's end 'the wrong is mixed'—or, at least, only in a sense I shall endeavour to explain. The wrong, I think, comes from her side during the last years; though that is not true of the period covered by this diary, when Tolstoy is still far from spiritual freedom. Let us turn back first and see what had happened before, then look forward and see what was to happen, for only by doing so can we understand these years.

Apart from the value of the works themselves which men of genius leave behind, many of these are also the most precious documents we possess upon the nature of man. It is part of the critic's business to point out their value in this respect as well. A creator, when he is

creative on a large scale, also betrays his own nature to the bottom, though, as an artist, he may be intent on other ends. Even little writers betray themselves, but in their case, it is usually possible to see farther into them than they see themselves; and when we do this, feeling superior, we call them insincere. Tolstoy's work shows him to have been a man deeply rooted in all that is symbolized by the word 'earth'. He is the great prose-poet of instinctive life. How he adores the body! How he loathes its deformations and decay! The smell of sweating men or horses, of fields and woods is as good to him as made-up perfumes are nauseous, having nothing elemental about them. How he loves the movements of animals, the unconscious gestures of children, and the sight of man or woman rejoicing in the pride of life and in their physical well-being! The other side of him, his Christian consciousness, feared these things; but till half his life is gone, though it was fighting upwards from the beginning, it does not submerge this profound response to physical life. And it never did so completely. Even in his old age Gorki notices in him something Pan-like, half animal, half god. We are too apt to think of his attacks upon the lives of the rich and the sophisticated pleasures of civilization, of his contempt of everything that luxury-shops contain, as springing from his Christian conscience. It was his pagan elemental side which lent such withering power into his descriptions.

One of his earliest dream-like remembrances of his childhood was of bathing in a tub. 'I was,' he wrote in *Childhood, Boyhood and Youth*, 'for the first time, conscious of and admired my young body, with the ribs that I could trace with my finger, and the smooth, dark tub, the withered hands of the nurse, and the warm,

steaming, circling water, its splashing, and above all the smooth feeling of the wet ends of the tub when I passed my hands over them.' From that moment, when as a child of three he first enjoyed and admired his own small, naked body, he never ceased unconsciously to worship it, and the deepest element in all his feelings and thoughts remained that first innocent, instinctive love of the body and of the 'earth' to which it belongs.

With such love of life goes, as smoke with fire, a horror of death; not the coward's fear of the moment of it (Tolstoy often proved he was no coward), but an animal and metaphysical revolt against death, the fact, such as shudders also through the work of Maupassant. That revolt, and an alternate rapture and dread whenever Tolstoy loses himself in instinctive living, recur again and again in his fiction. Happiness is to be one with Nature. This was the philosophy which the old Cossack, Uncle Yeroshka, lived by, and Olenine-Tolstoy, the hero of *The Cossacks*, longed to accept and never could accept completely. For fifty years no man could have enjoyed with deeper excitement not only these satisfactions, but all interests which the exercise of every faculty can bring. Then something happened to him: Life had been enchanting, then it gradually became more and more empty.

Things were meaningless whose meaning had always been self-evident. The questions 'Why?' and 'What next?' began to beset him more and more frequently. At first it seemed as if such questions must be answerable, and as if he could easily find the answers if he would take the time; 'but as they ever became more

urgent, he perceived that it was like those first discomforts of a sick man, to which he pays but little attention till they run into one continuous suffering, and then he realizes that what he took for a passing disorder means the most momentous thing in the world for him, means his death.'

'I felt [says Tolstoy] that something had broken within me on which my life had always rested, that I had nothing left to hold on to, and that morally my life had stopped. An invincible force impelled me to get rid of my existence, in one way or another. It cannot be said exactly that I *wished* to kill myself, for the force which drew me away from life was fuller, more powerful, more general than any mere desire. It was a force like my old aspiration to live, only it impelled me in the opposite direction. It was an aspiration of my whole being to get out of life.

'Behold me then, a man happy and in good health, hiding the rope in order not to hang myself to the rafters of the room where every night I went to sleep alone; behold me no longer going shooting, lest I should yield to the too easy temptation of putting an end to myself with a gun.

'Why should I live? Why should I do anything? Is there in life any purpose which the inevitable death which awaits me does not undo and destroy? . . .

'During the whole course of this year, when I almost unceasingly kept asking myself how to end the business, whether by the rope or by the bullet, during all that time, alongside of all those movements of my ideas and observations, my heart kept languishing with another pining emotion. I can call this by no other name than that of a thirst for God.'

That thirst was satisfied and he revived. But what happened then? It is what happened then which is necessary to the understanding of this Diary. Gradually the old instinctive delight in life came creeping back into his blood, flushing experience with other colours than the azure of Christian love. To him these were now allurements to death and destruction. The senses, the meaningless delight in 'earth', the pride of intellect and creation had deceived him once. He would never trust them again. Every conscious effort of his mind and will was directed to warning himself and others against them; towards recapturing that state when all had been felt to be vanity. Only then could that one emotion which had saved him rule absolute and supreme. He failed until old age came to his aid, a fact which is itself a proof—for whoever strove harder to follow what he thought was the only way?—that his view of life would not work. The period of the Diary is that in which the striving and the consequent strife with others are still at their height. Since the instinct of sex is apt to be a central point in such a battle, and Tolstoy himself was a man of immense vitality, he turns savagely upon it and writes his only pernicious and entirely wrong-headed book, *The Kreutzer Sonata*. It is the one poor work of his imagination, for in it he is revenging himself upon what he thinks has betrayed him from within. It is not a faithful study of what is, but a frantic gesture of abhorrence and hatred directed at something in himself. Nothing is more interesting in his wife's Diary than her attitude towards this book. She knew that it was a repudiation, a vilification, of the part which she still played in his life; she knew, too, that the world would so interpret it. What was disastrous was that he had

persuaded her of the truth of the judgements contained in *The Kreutzer Sonata*. Therefore when he continued to be what he had been, a passionately sensual man, she felt he was a humbug, and a hatred of him she did not understand, it was so mixed with devotion, possessed her.

Lyova is unusually kind and pleasant and cheerful [she writes in the Diary]. But all this, alas, is due to the same old cause. If only people who read *The Kreutzer Sonata* with such a feeling of veneration could look for a moment at the erotic life he lives—and which alone makes him happy and cheerful—they would cast this little god from the pedestal on which they have placed him. And yet I love him best when he is weak and kind and normal in his habits. It is no good being an animal, but neither is it any good being a preacher of principles which one is unable to practise.

‘And yet I love him best when he is weak and kind and normal’—how revealing that is! This comment on that fatal book is also revealing:

When we came home, I corrected the proofs of *The Kreutzer Sonata*, a book which I always dislike. The beginning is so false, where he talks in the name of *both* man and wife, and says that their periods of love are followed by periods of coolness, after satisfaction had been received. This is entirely wrong, and is quite contrary to the nature of women, especially of young women who have just got married. A very young woman does not have these fits; she *always* finds it unpleasant and shameful until she gets used to it, and her only consolation is that it gives pleasure

to the man she loves. Nor does a mature woman feel these periods of love and coldness. A woman who has been spoiled becomes more sensual only as intercourse is more frequent—she never reaches the point of satiety; she calms down only when she is left alone for a long time; and when she grows irritable it is not because she is surfeited, but because she is unsatisfied and ashamed of her perpetual passion. The change from love to coldness is only a male quality; it depends entirely on *his* satisfaction.

The psychology of this passage is worthless. The significance of it is that it shows he had made her ashamed. He had poisoned the springs of their physical life and yet compelled her to go on drinking from them. That was 'the wrong' on his side during these years. It is significant that the first time she attempted suicide the quarrel between them, though nominally over the disposal of a manuscript, was due to her unfounded jealousy of the editor, a woman, to whom he had given it. And with this feeling in her that he was hypocritical (though she never really believed it), the itch to prove that he was so in other ways became incessant. She made it as humiliating and difficult as possible for him to live as he thought right. True, she was also fighting for the prosperity of her children; but he had let her have her own way about the property, and all he now wanted was to free himself from the false position of continuing to live like a rich man. She, on her side, was determined to show the world that his ideas did not work.

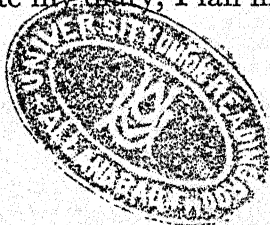
Lev Nikolaevich said that *his* religious feeling had changed his whole life. I said, Yes, externally perhaps, but internally not a bit. He lost his temper and started

shouting that in the past he used to hunt and look after the house, and teach the children and save money, but that he had stopped doing all that. I said it was a pity he had; it had all been for the good of the family, and the farming had been for the good of the district, and the teaching and saving had been a great help to me—while now, living the same life, in the same rooms, in the same surroundings, he did nothing, after his work was over, but ride a bicycle (as he had been doing for the last days) or ride whatever horse he liked; and eat rich, well-cooked food, and care for nothing about his children. He lost his temper completely; it is one of those cruel truths of which I ought not to remind him. Let him rest and enjoy himself in his old age. But then I couldn't help it, for he himself accused me of so many things; he said, for instance, that I had ruined his life—I, who have lived only for him and the children.

It is strange how Lyova's indifference acts upon me like a cold shower when we are together. 'What do I want with him? Why is he here?' I keep saying to myself; and yet, when we are separated, I keep on thinking of him every moment.

Keep him she would; if he escaped her it would be over her dead body. If he left his home the world would think she was a complete failure. She knows in her heart that she is no longer a help but a hindrance to him in his new life, but the world, and, above all, his followers, the detested 'dark people', 'the rabble', as she calls them, shall not know it. And yet there was something deeper, too, always there.

I feel that whenever I write my diary, I fall into the



habit of condemning Lev Nikolaevitch. But I cannot help complaining, since all the things he preaches, for the sake of human happiness, really complicate life so much as to make it almost unbearable. His vegetarianism means having to cook a double dinner, which is more work and expense. The sermons on love and the good have resulted in indifference to his family and the intrusion of all kinds of rabble into our family circle. The (verbal) rejection of worldly goods is responsible for this constant criticism and condemnation.

When matters get too complicated, I lose my temper and say things that I oughtn't to say; then I feel unhappy, and regret it when it is already too late.

But whose fault was it that the rejection was merely 'verbal'?

And so the story of this tragic predicament drags on, on, and on for another thirteen years after the Diary stops; no doubt with intervals, even long intervals, of comparative peace and happiness—for introspective people usually only run to their diaries when they are miserable—till at last the lacerating tussle over his secret will, drawn up under the influence of the detested Chertkov, ends it with a sudden snap. One night the old man wakes one of his daughters and tells her that the moment, for which there had been abortive preparations before, has come. He steals from the house leaving this letter behind:

4 a.m. 28th October 1910.

My departure will grieve you. I regret that, but do understand and believe that I could not act otherwise. My position at home was becoming, and had become, intolerable. Besides all the other troubles, I cannot live longer in the conditions of luxury in which I have

been living, and I am doing what old men of my age usually do, retiring from worldly life to live out their last days in solitude and quiet. Please try to understand this, and do not follow me if you should learn where I am. Your coming would only make your position and my own worse, but would not alter my decision.

Thank you for your honourable forty-eight years' life with me, and forgive me for everything in which I was to blame towards you, as I on my part forgive you with my whole soul for everything in which you may have been to blame towards me. I advise you to reconcile yourself to the new position in which my departure places you, and not to bear me any ill-feeling. If you wish to inform me of anything, do so through Sasha. She will know where I am, and will send on to me what is necessary. She cannot tell you where I am, because I have made her promise not to tell that to any one.

LEO TOLSTOY.

I have commissioned Sasha to collect my things and manuscripts and to send them on to me.

The Countess Alexandra then describes what happened the next morning:

'He's gone, quite gone,' cried my mother. 'Good-bye; I cannot continue to live without him. I will drown myself!'

She threw the letter on the floor and ran out. I called Bulgakov, who, arriving from the Chertkovs, had just entered the room, and I asked him to help me watch my mother. Bulgakov at once ran after her, and she, just as she was without goloshes and

with nothing over her dress, ran into the alley and further and further on in the direction of the pond. I watched her from the window of the dining-room, and saw that she drew nearer and nearer to the pond. I rushed downstairs at top speed and ran after her. Just then my mother saw Bulgakov, who was running after her, and rushed to one side to avoid him. I ran to intercept her, overtook Bulgakov, and got there just at the moment my mother reached the pond. She ran along the boards of the platform at the pond bank, where women rinse the clothes, but slipped and fell down. I rushed to her. She rolled over the side of the platform and fell into the water before I could hold her back. She began to sink, but I had already leapt into the water after her, and Bulgakov, who had now arrived, followed me in. Standing up to my breast in the pond I dragged my mother out and handed her to Bulgakov and to our servant Vanya, who had run to help us. . . . So things continued all that endless and nightmarish day. My mother wept unceasingly, beat her breast now with a heavy paper-weight and now with a hammer, and pricked herself with knives, scissors and pins. When I took all these from her by force she wished to throw herself out of the window, throw herself down the well, and so on.

She never saw him again. Her tragedy was, in an intensified form, that of any woman who has made her husband's life her own—when he walks out of it. His, that of a married prophet, one, too, whose doctrine not only precluded ruthlessness, but even that hardness which, in the long run, saves suffering.

READERS' REPORTS

NEW NOVELS

. In proportion as one enjoys books, one is usually reluctant to argue about them; but the appearance of a uniform edition of Mrs. Woolf's novels (*Hogarth Press. 5s. each.*), followed by a long controversial pamphlet which deals with the question of women in literature, and particularly with the question of the woman novelist, is an occasion which necessitates some departure from this general rule. In the first place, Mrs. Woolf is herself argumentative; *A Room of One's Own* (*Hogarth Press. 5s.*) shows her as the irritated champion of woman's intellectual rights. Who dares assert now that, with the few obvious reservations, women do not make good novelists? Happening to glance into the middle of her essay, the reviewer was horrified to see quoted there, amid acid commentary, a sentence, part of an anonymous criticism, which he remembers having contributed last year to the columns of *Life and Letters*. It expressed a belief that 'female novelists should only aspire to excellence by courageously acknowledging the limitations of their sex'. Is it credible, Mrs. Woolf exclaims, that this perverse and obscurantist dogma can belong, not to the opinions of 1828, but to opinions still current and, even to-day, presumptuously emitted? It is an echo of 'that persistent voice, now grumbling, now patronising, now domineering, now grieved, now shocked, now avuncular', whose idiotic admonitions and unwanted counsels keep buzzing in the female novelist's ears. And yet, curiously enough, my unhappy sentence was inspired by a wholehearted admiration of Mrs. Woolf!

The word 'limitations' was, no doubt, unfortunate. Every discussion, which rages over the aesthetic accomplishment of the female sex, goes to pieces on the same issue; the disputants can never make up their minds, whether woman's former disadvantageous position was the result of man's age-long tyranny, or whether, with equal chances, an extremely sturdy physical constitution and an immemorial tradition of matriarchal government, women have not merely slipped back on to the level which they appreciate most. At all events, let us eliminate from the argument terms suggestive of 'superiority' or 'inferiority'. In so far as they can agree to remain different, men and women are likely to effect harmonious combinations. One adores the supple agility of the panther; one reveres the inviolable dignity of the domestic cat. True, they cannot construct sewing-machines, nor have they the skill to invent new systems of metaphysics. But their sight is sharper, their sense of smell more exquisite, their movements are considerably more graceful than yours or mine. In fact, they, too, have their limitations; but one does not think of them as inferiors. And it is characteristic of their instinctive wisdom and unfathomable dignity that never, never do they attempt to walk upon their hind-legs.

Such, alas, is the spectacle afforded by the huge majority of women novelists. They aspire to masculine standards and, more often than not, make their criterion some individual man. Usually, their guiding star is unworthy of sustained pursuit; they are oblivious of fields, just as broad and, in their way, just as fruitful, which lie directly within the frontiers of their own sphere. Imagine, for example, the beautiful clouded snow-leopard at the Zoo sitting down to write a novel, which treated not of

the ennui of cage-life, the confused recollection of jungle loves and wars, but of the life and fireside economy of Herbert Smith, its bottle-nosed keeper! Perhaps it would attempt to see itself through its keeper's eyes, its theme 'leopards as seen by keepers; eventually, it would grow quite incapable of seeing itself—at least dispassionately, and become, under its rippling, moony pelt, not a leopard at all but an inferior Herbert Smith.

To change the image slightly: as a woman, Jane Welsh was not markedly inferior to Thomas Carlyle, the man, though she could not, nor, indeed, would have ever wanted to write *The French Revolution*. Unhappily for us, she squandered the substance of a dozen inimitable novels in letters to the rabbit-mouthed Babbie Chrystal. Supposing, however, that her novels *had* been written, I feel sure that they would have provided a convenient stepping-stone, in the history of modern literature, from Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf. Their wisdom would have been 'limited' but exquisite. We should have read them without any of the embarrassment which is provoked by a reading of certain contemporary female novelists—those infinitely 'tamed and shabby tigers' who have learned to ring dinner-bells and scrape together alphabets with talons which, if they had been put to their proper use, could have laid bare the reader's heart in a single devastating flash.

Thus the tendency of Mrs. Woolf's novels seems to be away from man-made forms, towards a mode sufficiently elastic to include the various treasures of an acute feminine sensibility. *The Voyage Out*, first published in 1915, is still half emergent from the chrysalis. Woman's grasp of situation and character—human character viewed from the outside—is notoriously less comprehen-

sive than man's; we are not entirely convinced, either by the mysterious South-American holiday resort or by the miscellaneous throng of English people whose loves and deaths constitute the material of the story. It is not until the last fifty pages that Mrs. Woolf reaches the full extent of her power, when the focus is narrower and more intense, subsidiary characters are swept aside, and the shuttered atmosphere of a sick-room, the day-to-day anxieties of the watchers and the agonizing obsessions of a feverish patient are described in memorable detail, with an extraordinary gift of sympathy.

Helen, of *The Voyage Out*, was the prototype of the calm maternal heroines, through the medium of whose sensibility Mrs. Woolf would be content henceforward to see her special world. From that specialized manner of observation rises the charm of *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*; it is like a net cast into the seething waters of experience, artfully cobbled and woven from the innumerable shreds and scraps of reverie which might be expected to cross the mind of an intelligent and clever woman. Mrs. Woolf divagates—but airily and casually—as only writers perfectly sure of their objective can afford to do without becoming diffuse. She has recognized her limitations; thus they need never occur to us except as an incentive to applause.

Among other novels, which can be recommended, is *The Dark Journey*, by that remarkable young French-American writer, Julian Green (*Heinemann. 7s. 6d.*); though this work seems to me far less impressive than his *Closed Garden*, reviewed in the columns of *Life and Letters* some months ago. As before, it is a story of violent passion, and the passions it delineates are hopeless and sterile, and doomed to failure almost from the moment of their birth.

Insensate emotion is once more displayed against a background of provincial tedium. Unlike its predecessor, however, *The Dark Journey* (in French, *Léviathan*) is always slightly incredible; it remains a heavy barbaric frieze, pitted with inky shadows, frenzied eye-balls and tense muscles bulging melodramatically from the tortured surface.

Love Story, by Thelma Woodhill (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.), is a first novel and, as such, unusually inspiring. It is a merciless exposure of the ill-effects of mother-love; the style is cold, matter-of-fact, and deadly. *Love by Accident* (Gollancz. 7s. 6d.) is contemporary satire and, in the intervals of being consciously 'amusing', is written with skill and intelligence. I prefer Mr. Marlow's earlier *Two Made their Bed*. Admirers of Mr. Alastair Crowley's *Diary of a Drug-Fiend* will not be disappointed by *Moonchild* (Mandrake Press. 10s. 6d.), his new novel. On page fifteen, Cyril Grey, an artist of genius, is disappointingly mum at a tea-party; but next morning, page seventeen, he enters Lisa's room 'with swift stealth. She was fascinated. . . . He came over to her, caught her throat in both his hands, bent back her head, and, taking her lips in his teeth, bit them, bit them almost through. . . . Instantly he released her, sat down upon the couch by her, and made some trivial remark about the weather. She gazed at him in horror and amazement. . . . Ultimately she recovered herself enough to order tea.' After this superb opening gambit, we are not surprised to learn that Lisa and Cyril become 'pals' as well as lovers.

P. Q.

Dryden and Howard, 1664-1668, edited by D. D. Arundell, M.A., Mus.B. (Cambridge University Press. 10s. 6d.). In editing the text of Dryden's Dedication of *The Rival*

Ladies, the *Annus Mirabilis* Letter, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, the *Defence* of the Essay, the Prologue to *Aurungzeba*, and the play of *The Indian Emperor* in its entirety, as also Sir Robert Howard's *Duke of Lerma*, with its Preface, Mr. Arundell has given us a goodly bill of fare, and also presented us with a pretty controversy. There was first a close friendship, then rivalry, and finally jealousy, between Dryden and Howard, who at last was moved to take up the cudgels against Dryden's 'towering crest'. His own *Duke of Lerma* is a pleasing thing enough, though Howard as a rule did not rise above the level of 'well-meaning worthiness', and both writers agreed at the end that English plays were to be preferred above French, Spanish and Italian, and that the old rule of 'the Unities' is absurd, though it suited Dryden in the last phase of the war of words to assume that Howard still maintained the opposite view on these questions. But the real controversy lay elsewhere. Sir Robert Howard held that repartee in rhymed verse is ludicrous, 'as it presumes either that both speakers are extempore poets, or that their arguments are premeditated'. Dryden stuck to it that, since the play itself is premeditated, any method may be employed, especially verse, which is the highest form of writing. So we have *The Indian Emperor* in rhyme, and *The Duke of Lerma* unrhymed; and both of them are excellent; though Mr. Arundell helps out the reader in each, not only by repunctuation and re-spelling, but by the ingenious interpolation of recurring three dots, which, since the plays are meant to be spoken, he hopes may avoid a meaningless singsong, and also give the impression of such pauses as a speaker would naturally make.

But the controversy remains, and we cannot say that it is quite decided yet. We have got past Shakespeare's

delighted use of the new toy of rhyme, to end a speech, so exquisitely and mercilessly burlesqued by Beerbohm in 'Seven Men'; but there is the splendid arrogance of Patmore confronting us still. True, neither 'The Angel in the House' nor the three great Psyche Odes are drama, but there is colloquy enough, and it is all in rhyme, and all natural. As Patmore said, what he felt at first to be fetters, he afterwards discovered to be wings. Perhaps he is an unsafe master to quote, for in both the 'Angel' and the Odes he rose to heights of inspiration denied to ordinary men. Moreover, the Cowleian Ode form is irregular, and trusts to the instinct and ear of the writer to a degree not to be measured. The playwright of the present day inclines to Sir Robert Howard's common-sense view, and more and more chooses prose for his dialogue. It may well be that one of these days rhyme—and metre too, for that matter—will seem to us as 'cribbed, cabined and confined' as the artificial pattern tricks of the Jacobean poets. But it is a day that we look forward to without pleasure. After all, it was Alfred Austin who sat in lofty judgement on Coventry Patmore's Eros Odes.

The Garden of Fidelity, Being the Autobiography of Flora Annie Steel (Macmillan. 12s. 6d.). This record of the life of a distinguished authoress and Indian novelist will be valued chiefly by her own inner circle. It is not strikingly written, though the few pages devoted to Indian problems arrest attention. The immutability of Indian life, the vast extent of India itself, so that the Bengali is as distinct from the Northern tribesman as a South Italian from an Esquimaux; the maintenance of the *purdah* system largely by the women themselves, and Mrs. Steel's hostility to zenana mission work—we want more notes of this kind.

There are a few sentences on the obsession of sex, chiefly arising from the immemorial belief that a woman's role in life is to bear sons; but this we all knew. A shrewd hint that most of the difficulties the Anglo-Indian meets with—discourtesy, want of attention, and so forth—come from lack of knowledge of the native tongue, makes us wish that Mrs. Steel had drawn more from her life-long Indian experience. She would have no race bar, making merit the only test for every post in India. But these, and like dicta, occupy a very small part of a volume mainly given to amiable chit-chat.

The Influence of Christ in the Ancient World, by T. R. Glover (Cambridge University Press. 5s.). Dr. Glover impresses us in this book much as he impressed us in his *Conflict of Religions in the Roman Empire*. If anyone wishes to know about the rule, the law, the customs, the literature of the Empire, let him go to Dr. Glover. What better in this volume, for instance, than his description of the 'pax Romana', that peace which, although it sank into lethargy, the Rome of the Caesars brought to the Mediterranean seaboard states, the peace which they lost when the Empire fell, and have never since recovered! This little volume is simply crammed with ripe knowledge, and apt quotations; the world of the first three centuries of the Christian era is skilfully outlined, and there is not a dull page. Where we think Dr. Glover comes short is in any very clear analysis of the reasons why Christianity permeated the society and finally the government with which he deals. He starts by denying that there was anything of the Apocalypticist in Christ or of the Apocalyptic in His teaching. But this is a very serious matter. If there was not, the early Church was

totally mistaken in its message and its expectations. More than this; three of the Evangelists must have either misinterpreted His words, or invented them, and, if the latter, have managed to imitate the quite unmistakable style of His language in an extraordinary fashion—a fashion that might cast doubt on other things He said. Then again, Dr. Glover too often takes refuge in vaguely declaring that the message of the Faith brought 'liberty'. That it did bring a new liberty to mind and heart we know, but we want to know how. On page 98, the writer actually declares that 'the legend of a reputed resurrection of some unknown person in Palestine nobody needed to consider'; we believe that St. Paul thought differently, and spent his life, as did other disciples, in the insistence on the resurrection of Jesus, 'the First-fruits of them that slept', as an historical fact. It was, indeed, the fact that ousted the ideal dream of Mithraism. It astonishes us that 'New Testament writers do not speak easily of the Cross'. Paul 'gloried' in it; and there are four detailed records of the Crucifixion. We are glad that Dr. Glover early drops an inclination to slang: 'there was no sense of hurry in Christ's mind, no nervous jogging of the Father's elbow'. This sort of thing only sets the teeth on edge. And the book is so good in its knowledge of all that Roman life meant that we are still left—perhaps it is well—face to face with the real miracle of its conquest by Christ.

Three Englishwomen in America, by Dame Una Pope-Hennessy (Ernest Benn Limited. 15s. net.). This is an entertaining and well-written book. The composite picture of America a century ago, seen through the eyes of three Englishwomen of different temperaments, and travelling

for different reasons, is well worth reconstructing. All three were intelligent observers, and all three could write. Fanny Trollope began her long career as a popular novelist with the *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. She had taken her delicate children to the United States with Utopian dreams of retrieving the family fortunes, and she found herself, as Dame Una says, 'exposed to the full blast of equality in day-to-day experience'. Her struggles were unrelieved by kindness, admiration, or congenial society, unless an exception be made for the scholar who informed her that 'Shakespeare is obscene, and thank God we are sufficiently advanced to have found it out.'

Fanny Kemble and Harriet Martineau both began as lionesses. The former had a brilliant success on the stage before she married Pierce Butler, and realized that her wealth was derived from slave labour, and that she could do nothing to ameliorate the misery, and end the cruelty, which she witnessed on their own estates.

Harriet Martineau enjoyed herself immensely. She travelled far and wide, basking in perpetual flattery, until she was boycotted for identifying herself with the anti-slavery movement in Boston. Her sufferings were nothing compared with those of Fanny Trollope or Fanny Kemble, but her strictures on American society are the harshest and the most sweeping.

Greek and Roman Bronzes, by Winifred Lamb (Methuen. 25s.). I am not surprised that this is the first book covering the whole field. The evidence is so widely scattered in place and time, sometimes superabundant, sometimes failing altogether, sometimes, as in the case of Roman bronzes, still undigested, that to shape it into a continuous history was a formidable undertaking. Miss Lamb

seems to me to have overcome the difficulties successfully, and to have produced a book which students can trust and readers can enjoy. The period covered is about two thousand years, from Minoan Crete to the fall of the Roman Empire: the evolution of types and methods is lucidly described and generously illustrated; the balance between archæology and art is well preserved. Miss Lamb has too much scholarship to be superficial and too much imagination to be dull: the following passage on the rare Arcadian primitives is a characteristic specimen of her manner. 'Sometimes all clothes are discarded except the cap: it can be very hot on the Arcadian hills. Very pious are the Arcadian shepherds: they bring the best of their flock as an offering to the gods of the flocks, Hermes and Pan Nomios. One of their company, small and debonair, holds by the tail a dead fox. He is probably not a shepherd but a hunter or trapper, and makes his livelihood by the sale of skins. Evidently the foxes were customary gifts, for, besides that carried by our little friend, we have a bronze (Athens: height .105 m.) from Mt. Lykaion. Just as the statuette perpetuates the devotion of the worshipper, so the dead animal immortalizes the gift: the gift may be either the flower of the flock or the proceeds of the chase.' This combination of precise knowledge and artistic appreciation gives her book a quality not too common in works on ancient art.

Systems and Chances, by Sir Philip Richardson, Bart. (G. Bell & Sons Ltd. 3s. 6d. net.). It is the opinion of many that though the gambler is at the mercy of chance, chance itself is at the mercy of the system; and this handbook has been compiled by Sir Philip Richardson to explode that error, if error it is. He has carefully analysed the Mart-

ingale, the Labouchere, the Montant Belge, and their more important variations, and shows that for each, and despite any modification, there must theoretically be a run which will break the player. With the implications of that point, however, most readers will not concern themselves; the majority will study Sir Philip's pages, not for his philosophic exposition of the fallacy of systems in general, but for his lucid explanations of systems in particular. Of the thousands who 'back their fancy', not with a hope of breaking the bank, but for the fun of passing time excitedly, comparatively few realize that by playing systematically they can increase their pleasure and prolong their resources. To the rest Sir Philip's book will be a very valuable guide; and those who do not need such primary instruction are his debtors for the arithmetical table by which he shows the probable incidence of any run up to twenty-four in anything up to four hundred million throws.

The Typography of Newspaper Advertisements, by Francis Meynell (*Ernest Benn Limited. 42s.*). The advertising expert practises an art without tradition, and, some would add, without excuse. Mr. Meynell, however, neither defends nor deprecates the object of his study; nor does he concern himself with its past or future. Accepting publicity as a condition of modern life, he has analysed the factors which make it effective in newspaper columns; and if those who devise advertisements will but study his precepts, what was a penalty of sight may well become one of its pleasures.

His book is divided into three parts. The first is an anatomy of display; it contrasts those advertisements which are static, and appeal by their logic when read

over, with those which are dynamic, and intended to be seen and read at once; it explains the balancing of masses, the value of borders, the virtue of white spaces, the selecting of types, and the merits of reproductive processes. Principles thus stated, tools are provided in the second part, which consists of specimens of fifty-four type-faces, selected from the foundries of England, the United States, France, Holland, and Germany, together with a table showing the number of letter-spaces of each face in an area of six inches by four inches, or in a line of pica ems, and a cross-index of comparative type-widths. The final section is a gallery of actual advertisements, shown on newsprint, by means of which the student may test Mr. Meynell's arguments, and form his own preferences. As a manual of instruction, this book deserves a place on the shelves of every constant advertiser.

The Great Revolt in Castile; a Study of the Comunero Movement of 1520-21, by Henry Latimer Seaver. (Constable. £1 4s.) Mr. Seaver, as his photographs, drawings, and descriptions of the country show, knows and loves Spain. He has conducted his researches among sources and Spanish historians diligently, and he quotes well. The illustrations are admirable, and the notes accompanying them satisfy the reader's curiosity. But, unfortunately, the author appears to have borrowed his form from Harrison Ainsworth. The tale of the Comunero Movement is told not in terms of coherent political motive, but as a would-be romance, jumping about from one place to another, and from one character to another, just as the author of *The Tower of London* switches from Bloody Mary to a comic scullion. The chapters are short, because, apparently, Mr. Seaver has not sufficient sense of literary

or historical composition to compose on a larger scale, while their titles seem the work of a scenario-writer, and the spelling is extravagantly American. In the whole book, there is not one word to explain the enormous and miserable significance of the Comunero rebellion in Spanish history. Whether the author himself has grasped that significance, it is impossible to tell. If he has, he must have a low opinion of his public's intelligence.

The visitor to Spain is struck, however much it may offend his æsthetic sensibilities, with the vigour and spontaneous originality of the pre-Hapsburg architecture; and if he probes deeper, he will find this reflected in all manifestations of the national life. Ferdinand and Isabella, it seemed, in unifying the country, had gathered this element of enterprise in the national character into a single stream of productivity and expansion. A century passed. And the stream was ended, in that monument of intellectual drought, the Escorial. The turning-point in this misfortune was Mr. Seaver's revolt. Charles of Ghent, the Charles V of history, arrived in Spain, an ignorant and despotic youth, only to find himself a candidate for the imperial throne of Germany, and to ask for money to further his election expenses. The towns of Castile, offended at the substitution of Flemings for Spaniards in the chief offices of the State, and profoundly opposed to the idea of an absentee king, made opposition, first through their representatives in the Cortes, then in the field. This opposition, by the series of events which Mr. Seaver describes, was crushed, the towns were robbed of their freedom, and the vigour of Spanish life was extinguished beneath the combined weight of Church and crown. This is the significance of the facts in Mr. Seaver's book, and he has omitted to mention it!